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(Since 1987 - Our 11th Year)

[Image]

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The Publisher, Staff & Editors

Florida Lotto - LottoMan v1.35
Results: 04/11/98: five of six numbers with three 3# matches

[Image]

>From the Editor's Desk...

Guess whos a Grandpa again. <grin> My son Ralph and his wife Pattie presented me with a 7lb 7oz beautiful baby boy at around noon Monday. Mom and Baby are both doing just fine. Oh! Daddy is doing fine too.

The DOJ is still very busy handing out hankies to the crybabies in the computing community that cant seem to "best" Microsoft. What a pity. In the beginning, everyone started off on a level playing field. Some scoffed at Windows v1.0 saying itll never take hold and went off in their own directions. Others ("the Johnnie come latelys") came to be as a result of Windows with all its MS inspired and generated accessory programs. Netscape comes to mind. Barksdales Netscape would have no reason to be here had it not

been for windows in the first place. Yet Barksdale wants MS to get off a piece of the action. Nobody forced Barksdale to come out with a Web Browser that supports Windows. Why must MS now "give" away its hard earned position of superiority? If I were Gates/MS Id be rather arrogant if not downright nasty about the whole affair.

One must concede the fact that Microsoft did make it ALL happen from the early days of MS-DOS till today. If none of MSSs efforts had borne fruits where would we all be today? Slogging around in CP/M and Cobal? Struggling with Digitals rubber band GUI? I know its a bad joke but it kinda rings true. The sore losers in the industry are trying everything in their power to force MS to give up ground and/or to sort of "start over" whilst allowing the criers more leeway to eat MSs lunch so to speak. What about the MS stockholders? Theyve all of them invested their hard earned money know the gamble they faced. They WON why should they be forced, directly or indirectly, to give up their earnings because Barksdale and friends are crying the blues? Hey.. Jim, this is the FREE ENTERPRISE System. "You run what you brung". Trying crying your way to the winners circle at any NHRA AA Fuel event like at Gainesville FL. The judges will laugh you right into the Glades. Netscape is on the slide. So now you wish that MS should use its resources and surrender market position to bolster poor leadership and slipshod marketing on Netscapes and others part?

You dont see King Kahn crying the blues or The good Doc at Corel for that matter. They are real, true grit players in the Free Enterprise marketplace. Corel has taken a few serious hits in the market as has Phillipes efforts yet they come back fighting just as hard as before and I might add, winning a few rounds too. But they do it the right way by EARNING their winnings!! Not crying to the DOJ and having a "bone thrown" to them.

[Image]

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LATE BREAKING INDUSTRY-WIDE NEWS

Weekly Happenings in the Computer World

Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Justice, Microsoft Officials Meet

Top Justice Department trustbusters met Microsoft lawyers and executives as the government pondered whether to bring new, broader charges against the software giant. "It's not unusual to meet with parties during the course of a negotiation," a Justice Department spokesman said after the 3-1/2-hour meeting ended. He had no comment on the meeting's substance. Microsoft general counsel William Neukom entered and left the Department of Justice by car through an auto entrance, avoiding reporters and camera

crews who were waiting outside.

We felt it was an extremely useful exchange of information on both sides," said Mark Murray from Microsoft's headquarters in Redmond, Wash. "I just don't think it's appropriate to comment on the specific details of the meeting." Microsoft, which had sought the meeting, met with Assistant Attorney General Joel Klein and other top antitrust officials to open a high-level dialogue when the company is under increasing scrutiny by state and federal law enforcement for alleged anti-competitive practices.

Some Justice Department staff lawyers say they believe the federal government now has enough evidence to file charges against Microsoft. In an interview this week in Washington state, Microsoft Chief Operating Officer Bob Herbold said the company was in daily contact with federal antitrust authorities and was providing information to state investigators. Eleven states are preparing to file antitrust charges against Microsoft, sources close to the investigation have said. They said the states would accuse Microsoft of using its dominance over computer operating systems to extend its control to related areas, such as the Internet. California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, South Carolina, Texas and Wisconsin are involved in the case and others may join, a source said.

In the past, Microsoft has reached agreements with authorities when it faced a serious court challenge. For example in January the company faced what legal experts said was the certainty of a contempt citation from U.S. District Court Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson. On the morning of the hearing, Microsoft and the government however announced they had reached an agreement that averted the potential contempt citation. Jackson is hearing government allegations that Microsoft violated a 1995 consent decree that was supposed to help ease the way for increased software competition.

The Justice Department has argued Microsoft defied the decree and competed unfairly against Netscape Communications in the market for browsers, software needed to look at the Internet's Web. Microsoft has asked an appellate court to throw out the government's charges, arguing that it was exercising a right under the decree to integrate a Web browser into its operating system. The expedited appeal will be argued before a three-judge panel of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit on April 21. On Thursday, a day before the talks with the Justice Department, Microsoft announced it had revised contracts with about two dozen media and entertainment companies to eliminate exclusivity provisions.

Under the contracts, content providers featured on the "Channel Bar" of Microsoft's Internet Explorer browser were required to promote the Microsoft browser exclusively on their main Internet pages. The contract provisions drew the attention of Republican Sen. Orrin Hatch of Utah last month

at a hearing where he grilled Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates on the issue. At the time, the company said that it would get rid of the problem.

MS Appeals to Public With Newspaper Ads

A day before Microsoft Corp. is set to meet with government antitrust watchdogs to discuss its legal woes, the software behemoth took its case to the public with ads in five major U.S. newspapers.

"We believe the marketplace should determine what innovations consumers want. At Microsoft, the freedom to innovate for our customers is more than a goal; it is a principle worth standing up for," the company states in quarter-page ads in The Washington Post, The Washington Times, The New York Times, The Seattle Times and The Seattle Post-Intelligencer. Lawyers for Microsoft and the Department of Justice are set to meet Friday to discuss an upcoming federal appeals court hearing on the government's antitrust case against the company. Although the meeting is expected to address the DOJ's October suit over Microsoft's Internet Explorer browser bundling with its Windows 95 operating system, also looming on the horizon is a possible legal challenge involving the Windows 95 successor, Windows 98, which is set for a June 25 release.

Meanwhile, a dozen state attorneys general are also probing the software giant's business practices.

11 States Readyng Action Against Microsoft

Eleven states were preparing Thursday to file antitrust charges against Microsoft Corp. this month, increasing pressure on the federal government to take action against the software giant. Sources close to the investigations said the states would bring the kind of broad, new charges against the Redmond, Wash., company that the Justice Department has been investigating for months. The sources said the states would accuse Microsoft of using its dominance over computer operating systems to extend its control to related areas, such as the Internet.

Bugs in Netscape Communicator Code Slow New Products

CMP Techweb reported that new offerings based on the newly available Netscape Communicator 5.0 source code are getting held up in production as developers struggle to make sense of the half-baked freeware. Netscape had new business in mind when it decided to ship Communicator code for free, said Netscape CEO Jim Barksdale. But Bigfoot CEO Jim Hoffman said his company, which had planned a new product around the code, was in for some surprises. Bigfoot is creating an Internet front end using the Netscape Communicator source code the company released free last week, but the job is tougher than the New York-based company thought it would be. Reaction from other developers to the free release of the Communicator source code has been mixed, with many complaints that the code isn't ready for prime time.

Windows Terminals About To Catch Fire

The Spring Comdex computer show, which is to be held in Chicago starting April 20, will be the unofficial coming-out party for technology from software giant Microsoft Corp. that enables underpowered personal computers to control Windows-based applications running on a sever.

In addition to providing a venue for a demonstration of Microsoft's forthcoming Windows Terminal Server, which enables the Windows NT operating system to distribute server-based applications to multiple users, some analysts and industry insiders said the event will also serve as an occasion to crown Microsoft's victory over the Java-based network computer (NC) movement.

"Our position is that Microsoft will win this game," said Michael Kantrowitz, executive vice president of Neoware Systems Inc., which makes a computing device, a so-called Windows-based terminal, designed to run Windows applications stored on a server. "Companies don't want to replace their Windows applications and rewrite them in Java. They want to use what they already have." Microsoft first proposed its server-centric approach to personal computing last year, largely as a defensive move to protect the dominance of the Windows operating system in corporate environments. Feeling threatened by the growing support behind the network computer, an inexpensive computing device that runs Java applications downloaded from powerful servers, Microsoft announced it would build a multiuser version of Windows NT that would distribute Windows applications to scaled-down PCs.

Microsoft usurped much of the NC's momentum by providing corporations with the means to reduce the cost and complexity of routine maintenance by placing the bulk of processing power on centralized servers. The key to the projected success of Windows terminals, however, said Eileen O'Brien, an analyst at International Data Corp., is that it enables enterprises to reap the rewards of the network computing model without giving up access to their Windows applications. The sale of hardware designed to run distributed Windows applications is expected to start slowly, with only 302,000 terminals sold to corporations in 1998, according to O'Brien. By the middle of the year, however, when Microsoft is expected to release the commercial version of its Windows Terminal Server product, O'Brien said the sale of Windows terminals should pick up, reaching more than 5 million units in the year 2002.

Although O'Brien said she believes the Windows terminal market will account for only about 10 percent of personal computers sold to enterprises, others think penetration percentages could be twice that. Chad Gibbons, product manager at Windows terminal maker Boundless Technologies Inc., said that in addition to being a replacement device for mainframe terminals, Windows terminals will be deployed as substitutes for full-blown personal computers that are

primarily used for productivity applications, such as a word processor or a spreadsheet program.

Boundless, much like Neoware, Wyse Technologies Inc. and other terminal makers, has diverted plans to build Java-only devices to concentrate on Windows terminals, which start at about \$250 and should be unveiled at the Spring Comdex show. Despite the apparent momentum around the Windows terminal market, O'Brien said several questions have to be answered before enterprises are likely to adopt the technology. John Frederiksen, group product manager for Windows Terminal Server, said pricing has yet to be set but that it will not cost customers more to run Windows applications from a terminal than it does from a standard PC.

Firm Sues Digital Over Alta Vista Trademark

Alta Vista, a British media concern, said on Wednesday that it filed a trademark infringement lawsuit against computer giant Digital Equipment over Digital's use of "Alta Vista" for its Internet search engine. In the case filed in U.S. District Court in Washington, the suit alleges that Digital's use of Alta Vista for an increasing array of software infringes on Alta Vista Corp.'s trademark in the United States. The suit seeks an injunction barring Digital's use of the mark and a court order canceling Digital's federal trademark registrations, the company said in a statement. A Digital spokesman said the company had not yet received the lawsuit and will respond accordingly after it gets the complaint.

Microsoft to Modify 'PalmPC' Name, Bowing to 3Com

Microsoft Corp. said it agreed to resolve a brand-name dispute with 3Com Corp. and will modify its use of the word "Palm" in marketing its handheld computers. In a rare retreat, Microsoft will no longer refer to its class of tiny computers as "PalmPCs." Instead, its worldwide marketing will use "Palm-size PCs." In return, 3Com, which sells the popular PalmPilot handheld computer, agreed not to pursue any lawsuits. Microsoft, the world's biggest personal computer software company, rarely backs down from lawsuits or marketing disputes. The Redmond, Wash., company said it agreed to resolve the issue because of its "strong, long standing business relationship" with 3Com, the world's second-biggest computer networking equipment vendor.

Apple Denies Imatec Patent Claim

Apple Computer has denied the allegations of the lawsuit filed against it by Iamtec and said it intends to vigorously defend itself. The lawsuit, filed February 13 in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, contends that Apple's ColorSync products infringe on Imatec's patents related to color calibration of computer equipment. In response, Apple denied the infringement claims and has counterclaimed to invalidate the Imatec patents. Apple said that products which used the color calibration in question were on the market in the U.S. in

1985. Apple said that using these techniques, as well as other techniques which were publicly available before the filing of the Imatec patents, it developed ColorSync in 1993.

Judge's Ruling Could Bring Domain Refunds

Registrants of Internet domain names soon could get part of their money back, thanks to a federal court ruling this week. Federal District Court Judge Thomas Hogan ruled that the \$50 million collected for the so-called "Intellectual Infrastructure" fund -- which is designed to go toward Web improvements -- is an illegal tax because the government never approved it. Network Solutions Inc. (NSOL), the company that collects funds and registers domain names including .org and .com, already had stopped collecting the fees after a judge issued a preliminary injunction in prohibiting the company from charging any more fees. That brought the cost of registering domain names down to \$35 from \$50 per year. Bill Bode, a lawyer representing domain name registrants who sued NSI in October, said he was pleased with the outcome.

"It was a very positive ruling," said Bode, adding that he's been getting lots of calls from domain name registrants. "They want to know when they'll get their money," he said. "I tell them 'soon.' "

Lawyers for the plaintiffs are still seeking class action status, which would mean that all domain name registrants would automatically receive refunds. The judge has yet to rule on that issue and what will actually become of the money in the fund. NSI's positive spin Judge Hogan threw out claims that all fees collected by NSI were excessive because they exceeded the company's actual costs. NSI officials put a positive spin on that ruling.

"This decision amounts to business as usual for Network Solutions by affirming that our position as the exclusive registrar of domain names in .com, .net, .org and .edu is legally constituted and that NSI can charge a market rate for providing its services," said NSI CEO Gabe Battista in a statement. The judge also rejected claims that NSI amounted to an illegal monopoly.

FCC Report Keeps Internet Mostly Free of Charges

An FCC report issued Friday on who should subsidize telephone service for the poor and remote areas has largely spared the Internet from charges. The FCC said services that allowed customers to make callsover the Internet using a regular telephone handset appeared to fall under the definition of telecommunications services that should contribute to universal service charges. But the agency stopped short of decision saying it wanted to see more information on individual Internet telephone offerings. If charges are eventually levied, it would be a blow to firms like Qwest Communications International Inc. and IDT Corp., which want to offer Internet long-distance service at rates as low as 5 cents per minute. AT&T Corp. has also announced

plans to offer a similar service.

Hackers Improve Vintage High-tech Sound Toys

You know you've tapped a nerve when your best innovations come from enthusiastic fans hacking your product. What began as a small project by the team of musician-engineers at Swedish company Propellerheads (<http://www.propellerheads.se> to faithfully resurrect two early '80s electronic instruments using software emulation has blossomed into creative subculture on the Web.

Every new program feature on ReBirth 2.0, to be released in June, reflects on its users in such a way that it becomes hard to tell which came first: the software or the community. "I've been working with synths since 1979," says Ernst Nathorst-Boos, one of ReBirth's five creators. Among the other engineers, he says, "Peter Jubel has been building his own hardware designs and Marcus Zetterquist has a nice little collection of his own. This is a program we all wanted and needed for ourselves."

ReBirth, when installed on a computer, emulates the robust Roland TR-808 drum machine running in tandem with two rubbery TB-303 bass machines. The new release throws another drum simulation, of the Roland TR-909, into the mix. Introduced in 1981, the plastic Roland boxes that ReBirth software emulates were directly responsible for the wildfire growth of techno and rap music during the '80s. Because Roland wanted to make machines that sounded like conventional pop-music rhythm sections -- and were probably not very concerned with catering to musical undergrounds -- the less-than-realistic-sounding line of drum machines was killed off. Though the original machines retailed for a couple hundred dollars apiece, they now fetch more than \$2000 per box from collectors.

Today, users are attracted by the "squidgy acid noise" of ReBirth, and use the low-cost software in conjunction with other cheap gear to produce high-quality dance tracks. (A careful ear will catch ReBirth's rattlingon recent CDs by Daft Punk, Nine Inch Nails, and Motley Crue.)

Nathorst-Boos says ReBirth was designed with the Internet in mind, and points to countless Web and FTP sites, chats, and at least one mailing list. ReBirthers like Germany's DJ Mouse and England's Stuart C-Nation, saythey got their start in the enthusiastic Web-based Amiga/PC tracker culture, and they now use ReBirth to swap 50K song files with a global pool of collaborators. Cherry Coke and Texas-based record label Bionic Teknologies have fueled the fire by sponsoring ReBirth song design contests.

Online users also seem inspired to hack ReBirth, by changing its sound resources and creating slick new visual interfaces. Baltimore-based musician scaNNer primarily creates Jungle or Drum & Bassmusic, but didn't really like the 808 sounds ReBirth makes. So he added some familiar Jungle sounds as well as his own musical samples to the ReBirth engine, and released the project as "Wobble." "I

think the driving force behind Wobble was just the ability to do it," scaNNer says.

Propellerheads, for its part, is co-opting hackers like scaNNer by making ReBirth easy to alter, and including several of the most impressive "Mods," or modifications, on its Web site and the ReBirth 2.0 CD-ROM. Besides Wobble, the impressive amateur overhauls now distributed on the official Web site include Pitch Black Edition, the Metallicon, and Alien Birth. "This great subculture lives its life regardless of what we do here in the office," says Nathorst-Boos.

Even before ReBirth uttered its first squawk, there were other software synthesizers inspired by early machines like the 303, such as Rubber Duck, created by a group of university students called D-Lusion (<http://www.d-lusion.com>), and seq-303, by Techno Toys <http://www.technotoys.com>. Boris Diebold, R&D manager for D-Lusion, insists its work hasn't been affected by ReBirth: "Where they tried, and succeeded, in emulating the real 303 sound to the best, we focused on new, innovative sounds."

Now, not only synth fans are writing 303 shareware, but Roland itself is simulating 808/303 sounds with its retro-friendly hardware Groove Box. The knob has turned full circle, and the Propellerheads couldn't be happier. "It turned out we did something that first of all many people thought was impossible," says Nathorst-Boos, "and secondly attracted a huge range of people, from pros to those with only a casual interest in music."

Seiko Instruments Says to Sell First Wristwatch PC

Seiko Instruments Inc. said Wednesday it would begin selling wristwatch personal computers in Japan on June 10 - the world's first wearable PC. A company statement said the new watch, called the Ruputer, can download data that includes text and pictures from other personal computers. The wristwatch PCs will be sold with three software applications that run on Microsoft Corp.'s Windows 95 operating system, it said. Watches come equipped with a 16-bit central processing unit and 128 kilobytes of main memory, it said.

GTE To Offer Faster Internet Access (ADSL)

GTE today said it will offer high-speed Internet access up to 50 times faster than conventional modems to consumers and businesses beginning in June. The company said its unit, GTE Network Services, will offer network-based asymmetric digital subscriber line service in about 300 central offices in 16 states. The plan is subject to regulatory approval, the company noted in a statement. The company said it plans to expand this service to no less than 30 additional markets in the second half of 1998.

This campaign "helps enable GTE to offer end-to-end Internet solutions on a broader scale, and is in keeping with the company's overall goal to become a national

provider of integrated telecommunications services," the company said. The new service will provide continuous Internet access in place of traditional dial-up modem connections, the release said. "Consumers can simultaneously surf the World Wide Web and place telephone calls over the same line," the company said. GTE said it will offer customers monthly and multi-year plans as well as volume discounts. The monthly target price range is \$30 to \$250, excluding certain charges, such as an installation fee, Internet service charges, and modem leases, the company noted.

Intel to Demo PII Possibilities

Intel Corp.'s latest Pentium II processors are expected to usher in an era of improved business application performance. At this week's launch in San Francisco of the 350MHz and 400MHz Pentium II chips, formerly code-named Deschutes, Intel will demonstrate systems running CPU- and I/O-intensive applications such as communications, file compression and decompression, and virus scanning and filtering.

At the heart of the performance boost is Intel's first 100MHz bus, which speeds connections to such components as graphics, memory and I/O. While automatic file compression, for example, is possible today through software such as Nico Mak Computing Inc.'s WinZip 6.3, Intel claims existing hardware has not been robust enough to support those capabilities. "There are still sizable delays in just sending e-mail across the network, but [the performance] of this architecture lets you leave the file compression switch always turned on so every file is automatically compressed and decompressed," said Will Swope, vice president of marketing at Intel, in Santa Clara, Calif.

Intel officials declined to discuss systems costs or relative performance, but independent channel sources said the price/performance of the new computers will be worth the upgrade. Still, in an era of dirt-cheap PCs, one of Intel's biggest challenges will be to justify the need for more processing power on the corporate desktop.

Intel to Launch New Chips

In one of its biggest product launches this year, Intel Corp. Wednesday will launch its belated entry to the booming sub-\$1,000 PC market, and its fastest yet Pentium II chips for the high end of the market. Intel said hundreds of computer makers worldwide are developing PCs around its new chips. But analysts said Intel's entry to the low-cost market, the first in its Celeron line, will not have the typical sweeping PC maker support and rivals are already attacking the chip and reports on its performance. To counter Intel, competitor National Semiconductor Corp. will launch a new 300-megahertz version of its Intel-compatible chip family, called the M II 300, priced at about \$180 in volume quantities of 1,000, available in May.

Adobe, Netscape, IBM Push New Web Imaging Format

Adobe, Netscape, and IBM say they have the format to popularize vector graphics on the Web -- the Precision Graphics Markup Language, or PGML. The companies have pitched the language to the World Wide Web Consortium as an open specification for vector graphics. Rather than the pixel-by-pixel definition of today's Web graphics standards -- the GIF and JPEG formats -- vector graphics use concise mathematical expressions to describe shapes, lines, and even animated positions. Vector formats are typically more efficient than bitmapped formats at handling special graphics tricks on a Web page, such as animated letters dropping into place in a sentence.

The current front-runner among vector formats is Flash, Macromedia's proprietary technology for rendering graphics in browsers. But the trio of companies say PGML better satisfies the Web's scalable, lightweight vector demands while giving graphic designers better precision over fonts, color, layout, and compositing. It describes a graphic as a collection of graphical objects -- path objects, shape objects, image objects, and text objects.

In addition to using an imaging model similar to Adobe's PostScript language and Portable Document Format, PGML is built around the vaunted extensible markup language (XML). Comparing it to Flash, Adobe's director of Web authoring products emphasized this XML basis for the language. "Flash is more of a binary kind of format, and not as easily readable," said Ted Simonides. "PGML is controllable through XML -- a future direction we expect to be more widely supported."

Macromedia Unveils New Flash Animation Products

Macromedia Inc., expanding its strategy to make more money from Internet-related software products, will unveil new versions of its Flash animation design program Tuesday and announce plans to make Flash an Internet animation standard. Macromedia, a maker of software for graphic artists and Web page designers, also said it would make the file format behind its Flash animation software open to other software companies, to encourage them to base new products on its technology. The moves could make the San Francisco software company more influential in setting Internet standards and could generate a significant amount of new revenue, the company and analysts said.

New Software Will Be Able to Grade Essay Papers

Bleary-eyed professors may soon find a way to cut down on the time devoted to test papers with the introduction of a computer program that can grade essays as well as people do. "It's not for (grading) grammar or style, but it can be used for exams in anatomy, history or psychology," said Professor Thomas Landauer, one of the software developers who has worked at Bell Laboratories and began working on Intelligent Essay Assessor 10 years ago. The software uses mathematical analysis to measure the quality of knowledge

expressed in essays.

Microsoft Sets Price of Windows 98 Upgrade

Microsoft's Windows 98 operating system upgrade will be released June 25 in retail outlets for sale at a suggested price of \$109, an executive of the software giant said. Microsoft officially will announce the release date and price today, although the June 25 date has been circulating for weeks and at least one Internet-based retailer began taking orders last month at about \$95 a copy.

After discounting, the upgrade probably will be sold in most stores for \$89 to \$100, Rob Bennett, group product manager, said. Federal and state regulators examining the company's business practices still could try to block release of the product, but time is running out. Completed software code is scheduled to be shipped to computer manufacturers by mid-May, in time to allow them to get at least some new machines with Windows 98 preloaded onto store shelves by the June 25 release date.

Last week, Microsoft executives met with antitrust regulators at the Justice Department in Washington to discuss the continuing federal investigation, which in part has focused on Windows 98 and its integration of the company's Internet browsing technology. The Justice Department contends Microsoft's use of its effective monopoly in the computer operating system market to boost its share of the browser market over rival Netscape Communications is a violation of Microsoft's 1995 agreement settling antitrust charges.

In January, Microsoft agreed to comply with a court order by giving computer manufacturers the right to install Windows 95 without the Internet Explorer browser icon on the computer desktop. While Microsoft is cranking up its impressive marketing machine to tout the benefits of Windows 98, publicity surrounding the launch is unlikely to approach the near-frenzy that accompanied the release of Windows 95 three years ago.

"It's a different product, and it's also a different market we're introducing it into," Bennett said. "It's not going to be Windows 95." Windows 98 likely will quickly become the standard operating system for new personal computers, but company executives have tried to limit expectations for how many of the nearly 120 million Windows 95 users will be willing to invest the time and money needed to upgrade. In addition to tighter integration of the Internet browser with the operating system, Windows 98 adds support for some of the latest hardware, including DVD disks, television and the universal serial bus for peripheral devices. The new system also offers "a lot of fixes and improvements" over Windows 95, including faster application startup and computer shutdown.

Windows 98 requires a minimum of a 486-class computer with 16 megabytes of random access memory and 195 megabytes of free hard disk space for the typical installation, compared

with 120 megabytes for Windows 95, Bennett said. The system is in the final stages of testing by 100,000 end users, including 70,000 ordinary consumers who paid about \$30 each to get a preview of the product.

Internet's 'Spam King' Recants But Some Doubt Him

"The Spam King," one of the most notorious junk e-mailers on the Internet, says he has abdicated his throne and promises never to sin again. But not everyone believes him. Sanford Wallace, 29-year-old president of Cyber Promotions Inc., abruptly announced his decision to a legion of long-time adversaries who frequent a news group dedicated to fighting bulk e-mail promotions. The term "spamming" was derived from a "Monty Python" sketch in which a waitress offers diners a choice of "spam, spam, spam, spam and spam." Wallace once boasted his Philadelphia-based firm was sending out 25 million promotional e-mails daily on behalf of himself and his clients.

U.S. Commerce Secretary Says Encryption Policy Failing

The Clinton administration's internal battle over regulating data scrambling technology burst into the open Wednesday as a top official conceded the current policy on computer encryption was failing. Commerce Secretary William Daley noted the administration has been unable to put in place even a modest easing, approved by President Clinton in 1996, of tight export limits on encryption. Encryption products, which scramble computerized information and render it unreadable without a password, have become an increasingly critical means of securing global communications and Internet commerce.

Microsoft Announces Windows 98 Is Scheduled to Be Available on June 25

Excitement for Windows 98 Building Among PC Enthusiasts

04/14/98

REDMOND, Wash. - Microsoft Corp. today announced that customer anticipation is high for the upcoming release of the Microsoft+ Windows+ 98 operating system, scheduled to be available worldwide on June 25, 1998. In addition, a recent consumer-event survey revealed that 95 percent of those surveyed plan to upgrade. Windows 98 will be available simultaneously to customers in stores and on new PCs from leading manufacturers.

"Windows 98 is catching fire among the PC enthusiasts," said Yusuf Mehdi, director of marketing, personal business

systems group at Microsoft. "The beauty of Windows 98 is that it runs applications faster and easier than Windows 95, while unlocking a whole new range of hardware devices and entertainment capabilities for consumers."

Customer Excitement Builds

As the launch of Windows 98 approaches, consumer anticipation continues to grow - as evidenced by the response to recent programs such as the quarterly Microsoft eXtreme live satellite broadcast. The event, which showcased Windows 98 in 45 theaters across the United States and Canada, was sold out with approximately 40,000 enthusiasts pre-registering to attend. Survey results from the event showed overwhelming support for the forthcoming product, with over 95 percent of attendees announcing their plans to upgrade to Windows 98. In addition, 97 percent of attendees reported they would recommend Windows 98 to their friends and family.

Over 150,000 eager consumers worldwide are participating in Microsoft's Consumer Beta Preview Program, which offers customers an opportunity to "test drive" the Beta 3 version of the product before the final release.

A recent independent survey by Windows Magazine found that 62 percent of users of Windows who plan to upgrade to Windows 98 will do so within the first six months after the launch of the product, while 87 percent said they will do so within the first year. This compares to 68 percent of users who said they would upgrade to Windows 95 in the first year. Users cited the product's increased functionality and improved performance as key criteria for their decision.

Windows 98 Works Better, Plays Better

Windows 98 builds on the breakthrough features of Windows 95 by improving performance, reliability and ease of use, as well as unlocking an exciting new range of PC hardware and entertainment capabilities.

In particular, Windows 98 offers the following key consumer benefits:

Improved performance and reliability. With Windows 98, Microsoft has focused on improving the key areas that keep users waiting on their PCs today, including opening applications, which averages 36 percent faster, accessing the Internet, viewing graphics and shutting down the PC, which is up to two to five times quicker than with Windows 95. Windows 98 dramatically improves performance in these areas so users can spend more time enjoying their PC and the Internet. In addition, Windows provides users an average of 28 percent more disk space through more efficient storage of data on the hard drive.

Simplified navigation, help and Internet access. Windows 98 improves the key areas where PCs typically present users with difficulties: navigating and locating information,

finding help when encountering a problem, and accessing the Internet. The enhanced user interface of Windows 98 makes use of key Internet Explorer technologies to unify and simplify the desktop, making it quick and easy for users to navigate information, whether it resides on their PC or the Internet. Accessing help also becomes easier with the new Web-based online help system that provides easy-to-access information when encountering problems, enabling simplified searching for information. Additionally, Windows Update, a centralized Web-based resource site, allows registered users to keep their PCs running optimally by providing the latest drivers and system updates, ensuring their PCs are always tuned and updated. (Web-based online help and Windows Update require Internet access, which may require a separate fee through a service provider).

A new range of PC hardware and entertainment capabilities. Just as Windows 95 enabled a range of new 32-bit software applications, Windows 98 ushers in a whole new range of hardware and entertainment functionality. Now, not only do games run better on Windows 98-based PCs than on traditional game console devices, but Windows 98 includes native support for universal serial bus (USB), which makes using additional hardware devices as easy as plugging in a toaster. In addition, Windows 98 provides DVD and television broadcast capabilities, allowing a PC with a TV tuner card to seamlessly receive and display television and other data distributed over broadcast networks (reception depends on the availability of broadcast sources in a given area).

Estimated retail pricing for the upgrade version for users of Windows 95 and Windows 3.1 is \$109 (U.S.).

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software for personal computers. The company offers a wide range of products and services for business and personal use, each designed with the mission of making it easier and more enjoyable for people to take advantage of the full power of personal computing every day.

Source: National Software Testing Laboratory (NSTL), December 1997. Results based on differences in application load times on identical hardware systems running Windows 98 vs. Windows 95. Systems with Windows 98 used the FAT32 file system and were optimized with the Windows 98 Maintenance Wizard. These results are averages obtained from launching multiple applications on a variety of PCs, with processors ranging from 486/66MHz to Pentium 200 MMX, with 32 MB of RAM. Your own results will vary depending on your system configuration. Best results are obtained with faster processors and more RAM.

Results based on a test of 200 users' hard drives. This test calculated the space to be gained by converting from FAT16 to FAT32. To convert to FAT32 you need a 512MB or larger hard drive partition. Actual experience will vary depending on hard drive partition size and number of files on your system. Hard drive partitions in excess of 1 GB and/or a large number of files yield best results.

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Windows 98 Beta 3 Release - Feature Overview

New Feature	Description
Complete Internet Integration	
Integrated Internet Shell	With the Integrated Internet Shell included with Windows 98 Beta 3, Internet access becomes a seamless part of the user interface. Users will no longer have to learn multiple applications one to look at their local information, perhaps another to look at their network, and unquestionably another to use the Internet or intranet. With the Integrated Internet Shell, Windows 98 Beta 3 unifies this process into one utility to universally view local, network, intranet, and Internet data, so you can get to the information you need faster and easier.
Advanced Internet Browsing Functionality	<p>Windows 98 Beta 3 provides the easiest, fastest, and most entertaining way to browse the Web. This is done via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Advanced browsing capabilities such as AutoComplete, enhanced Web searching, improved favorites, navigation history on the Forward/Back buttons, and improved printing.* Support for all major Internet standards including HTML, Java, ActiveX, JavaScript, Visual Basic. Scripting, and major security standards.* Improved performance with Dynamic HTML, a just-in-time Java compiler, and basic code "tuning."
Personalized Internet Information Delivery	When users are asked the biggest problem they have with the World Wide Web, the number one response is getting the information they need. Windows 98 Beta 3 addresses this problem by providing a mechanism to automatically select and schedule downloads of the

information you care about. This enables you to see what has changed on a Web site without physically visiting the site and even allows you to view the site when you are not connected to the Web.

Suite of Tools
for Internet
Communication

Windows 98 Beta 3 also contains rich tools for online communication including:

- * Outlook Express, a full featured e-mail and news reading client.
- * Microsoft NetMeeting, a complete Internet conferencing solution providing standards-based audio, data, and video conferencing functionality.
- * Personal Web Server (and the Web Publishing Wizard), which provides an easy way to publish Web pages on intranets or the Internet.
- * Microsoft FrontPad is a WYSIWYG (what-you-see-is-what-you-get) HTML editor based on the editing tools in Microsoft FrontPage. 97, the award-winning, full-featured Web authoring and management tool.
- * Microsoft NetShow is a platform for streaming multimedia over networks that range from low bandwidth dial-up Internet connections to high bandwidth switched local area networks. From simple audio to sophisticated interactive Web-based applications, companies use NetShow to offer new streaming content for applications such as training, corporate communications, entertainment, and advertising to users all over the world. The NetShow player is installed with Windows 98.

Windows
UpdateIncludes
the Update
Manager

The Windows Update Web Site is an extension to Windows 98. It is a new, centralized Web-based resource site that allows registered Windows 98 users to get more out of their PC. Windows Update keeps users systems tuned and up-to-date by providing easy access to the latest drivers and operating system files on an on-going basis. Windows Update also makes computing easier by providing product assistance with up-to-date information and answers to users "how-do-I-do" and "how-do-I-fix" questions.

Dial-Up Networking Improvements (Including Multilink Channel Aggregation)	The Dial-Up Networking included with Windows 98 Beta 3 has been updated to support: Dial-up scripting (which can automate the process of connecting to bulletin boards and online services); Dial-Up Networking user interface enhancements to simplify setting up and using dial-up connections; and support for Multilink Channel Aggregation which enables users to combine all available dial-up lines to achieve higher transfer speeds. For example, you can combine two or more ISDN lines to achieve speeds of up to 128K, or combine two or more standard modem lines. This can provide dramatic performance improvements when dialing into the Internet or corporate network.
Client Support for Virtual Private Networking (VPN)	Virtual Private Networking is a new networking support for remote users to access their corporate network via a secure connection. Virtual Private Networking utilizes the Point-to-Point Tunneling Protocol (PPTP). Support for this service is natively built-in to the operating system.
Online Services Folder	The Windows 98 Beta 3 desktop contains an Online Services Folder with links to America Online (AOL), AT&T WorldNet, CompuServe 3.0, and Prodigy clients. When you click the link to the client, a setup program starts that automatically registers you with that Internet Service Provider.
Internet Connection Wizard	The Internet Connection Wizard is designed to make a first time connection to the Internet simple. The Internet Connection Wizard gives the user a list of National ISPs to choose from, then the Wizard will then do all of the software configuration for the user.
HTML-Based Online Help	To assist users in finding "help" information, Windows 98 includes an HTML-based Online Help system. This help system is extensible and enables simplified help searching.
15 Troubleshooting Wizards	These Troubleshooting Wizards can help you quickly diagnose and solve technical problems with Windows 98. Troubleshooters are scenario-based walkthroughs that the user can customize to their situation by choosing the answer that fits their situation. The Troubleshooting Wizards

included in Windows 98 address the following areas: Network, Modem, Startup Shutdown, Print, DriveSpace 3, Memory, MS-DOS Programs, Display, DirectX, Sound, The Microsoft Network, Hardware Conflict, Dial-Up Networking, Direct Cable Connection, and PC Card.

Higher Quality

Setup Enhancements	Several enhancements have been made to the Windows 98 Beta 3 setup program in an effort to decrease setup time while increasing setup reliability. In addition, the setup interface shows you how far along you are with the setup process.
Faster Shutdown	The time it takes to shutdown the system has been dramatically reduced in Windows 98.
FAT32	FAT32 is an improved version of the FAT file system that allows disks over two gigabytes to be formatted as a single drive. FAT32 also uses smaller clusters than FAT drives, resulting in a more efficient use of space on large disks. On average users will get as much as 28 percent more hard drive space using FAT32. Need more space on your drive? Find out how much space you can gain with FAT32
FAT32 Conversion Utility	For added flexibility, Windows 98 Beta 3 includes a graphical FAT32 conversion utility, which can quickly and safely convert a hard drive from the original version of FAT to FAT32.
Power Management Improvements	Windows 98 Beta 3 includes built-in support for Advanced Configuration and Power Interface (ACPI). This allows you to switch on or off your PC like you would your TV set. ACPI is an open industry specification proposed by Intel, Microsoft, and Toshiba which defines hardware interfaces that allow for standard power management functionality throughout a PC system. In addition to ACPI support, Windows 98 Beta 3 includes support for the Advanced Power Management (APM) 1.2 extensions including: Disk spindown, PCMCIA modem power down, and resume on ring.
Windows Scripting Host	Windows 98 Beta 3 supports direct script execution from the user

interface or the command line (a script is simply a series of commands that can be automatically executed). This support is provided via the Windows Scripting Host (WSH) and allows administrators and/or users to save time by automating many user interface actions such as creating a shortcut, connecting to a network server, disconnecting from a network server, etc. The WSH is extremely flexible with built-in support for Visual Basic scripts, Java scripts, and a language independent architecture which will allow other software companies to build ActiveX scripting engines for languages such as Perl, TCL, REXX, and Python.

New Accessibility Tools

Windows 98 includes two new accessibility tools including - the Accessibility Configuration Wizard which helps people adapt Windows' options to their needs and preferences, and a low-end screen magnifier which helps people with moderate vision impairments and those working on unfamiliar machines.

Win32. Driver Model (WDM)

The Win32 Driver Model (WDM) is an all new, unified driver model for Windows 95 and Windows NT. . WDM will enable new devices to have a single driver for both operating systems. The WDM has been implemented by adding selected NT Kernel services into Windows 98 Beta 3 via a special virtual device driver (NTKERN.VXD). This allows Windows 98 Beta 3 to maintain full legacy device driver support while adding support for new WDM drivers.

Windows Maintenance Wizard

The Windows Maintenance Wizard was designed to make the PC more self-maintainable. The Wizard schedules tune-up jobs to be run automatically on a regular basis. Windows Maintenance Wizard will help you by:

- * Deleting unnecessary files.
- * Making sure your hard disk is optimized and properly functioning.
- * Launching applications up to 36 percent faster (in average).

You can launch the Windows Maintenance Wizard from the System Tool group off of the Start Menu. Features of Windows Maintenance Wizard include:

Disk Defragmenter

The new Disk Defragmenter uses the process of disk defragmentation to increase the speed with which your most frequently used applications run. To accomplish, this Disk Defragmenter creates a log file which identifies your most commonly used programs. Once this log file has been created, it can be used by Disk Defragmenter to store the files associated with most commonly run programs (the files will be stored contiguously on the hard disk). Placing all of the files associated with a given application in the same location on your hard disk will optimize the speed with which your application runs.

ScanDisk

Windows 98 Beta 3 has been enhanced to run ScanDisk automatically in the event the operating system is shut down improperly or your hard disk suffers a hard error. This feature will significantly help people ensure that their hard drives are in proper working order, free of lost clusters, cross-linked files, etc.

Disk Cleanup

Disk Cleanup is a tool in Windows 98 Beta 3 that automates the task of cleaning unwanted file off of the hard disk, increasing free space. This tool is especially useful to help users clean out Internet cache files that can accumulate after browsing the Web. Additionally, this tool is customizable by the user to designate files to remove.

Microsoft System Information Utility 4.1

Windows 98 now contains a centralized system information utility that gathers system configuration information for technical support. This tool is comprised of a collection of ActiveX controls, each responsible for collecting and displaying a certain category of system information in the right frame of Microsoft System Information Utility. A Support Engineer can guide the user experiencing an issue to Microsoft System Information Utility to facilitate the information gathering process.

System File Checker Utility

System File Checker keeps track of critical files that make your computer run. If these files are moved or

changed, System File Checker provides an easy way to restore these files. Once file changes are detected, System File Checker offers the user several courses of action.

Registry Checker Registry Checker is a proactive support program that finds and resolves Registry problems, and regularly backs up the Registry. Windows 98 Beta 3 provides both an MS-DOS- and a Windows-based program for scanning the Registry, backing up and restoring the Registry and system configuration files.

Automatic Skip Driver Agent (ASD) Automatic Skip Driver Agent (ASD) identifies potentially dangerous failures that are known to have caused Windows 98 Beta 3 systems to stop responding and marks them so they are bypassed on subsequent startups.
Automatic Skip Driver:

- * Identifies hardware devices that fail to respond when tested by Windows 98 Beta 3.
- * Displays a dialog box indicating that it has detected a failure that may cause the system to stop responding.
- * Prompts you with the option to bypass this action on subsequent startups.

New Dr. Watson Utility Windows 98 Beta 3 includes an enhanced version of the Dr. Watson utility. With Dr. Watson enabled, when a software fault occurs (general protection fault, hang, etc.), Dr. Watson will intercept it and indicate what software faulted and why. In addition, Dr. Watson collects detailed information about the state of your system at the time the fault occurred. It logs this information to disk, and can display it on screen to assist administrative and product support personnel in determining the cause of the fault.

System Configuration Utility System Configuration Utility is the graphical replacement for Sysedit. This tool allows the user to troubleshoot through a process of elimination with check boxes. System Configuration Utility allows the user to create and restore back ups of configuration files.

Version Conflict Version Conflict Manager detects file

Manager	version conflicts with installed programs. Windows 98 Beta 3 will then install the Windows version of the driver. By doing this, Windows 98 Beta 3 puts the system in an optimal compatibility stage. Version Conflict Manager also stores all files and has an easy user interface that enables the user to change the driver if needed.
New Backup Utility	This new backup applet supports SCSI tape devices and makes backing up your data easier and faster.
Remote Access Server	Windows 98 Beta 3 includes all of the components necessary to enable your desktop to act as a dial-up server. This allows dial-up clients to remotely connect to a Windows 98 Beta 3 machine for local resource access or connecting to an IPX/SPX and/or NetBEUI network.
Display Setting Enhancements	Display Setting Enhancements provide support for dynamically changing screen resolution and color depth. Adapter refresh rate can also be set with most newer display driver chipsets. Windows 98 Beta 3 also includes the display enhancements previously available in Microsoft Plus!. (Microsoft Plus! is an add-on pack for Windows 95 which provided several minor operating system enhancements.) The enhancements with Windows 98 Beta 3 include: full window drag, font smoothing, wallpaper stretching, large icons, and hi-color icons.
New Generation of Entertainment Functionality	
Broadcast Architecture	With a TV tuner board installed, Windows 98 allows a PC to receive and display television and other data distributed over the broadcast networks. Windows 98's Program Guide, which is updated continuously, lists television shows on now and in the future and allows for instant tuning into shows for viewing on the PC. Windows 98 can also receive Enhanced Television programs, which combine standard television with HTML information related to the programs, as they become available. Additionally, Windows 98 users will be able to receive Internet content or other data services via the broadcast networks, without tying up their existing phone

lines.

ActiveMovie	ActiveMovie is a new media-streaming architecture for Windows that delivers high-quality video playback while exposing an extensible set of interfaces upon which multimedia applications and tools can be built. ActiveMovie enables playback of popular media types including MPEG audio, .WAV audio, MPEG video, AVI video, and Apple QuickTime video.
Support for Intel MMX Processors	Provides support for third parties to build software that exploits the Intel Pentium Multimedia Extensions (MMX) for fast audio and video support on the next generation of Intel Pentium processor.
Enables the Latest Accessories	
Multiple Display Support	Multiple Display Support allows you to use multiple monitors and/or multiple graphics adapters on a single PC. The ability to have your work environment displayed on multiple monitors can be extremely beneficial in many areas including: desktop publishing, Web development, video editing, and gaming environments.
Support for New Generation of Hardware	One of the major goals of Windows 98 Beta 3 is to provide complete support for users to take advantage of the array of innovations which have occurred in computer hardware over the last few years. Some of the major hardware standards supported by Windows 98 Beta 3 include: Universal Serial Bus (USB), IEEE 1394, Accelerated Graphics Port (AGP), Advanced Configuration and Power Interface (ACPI), and Digital Video Disc (DVD).
PCMCIA Enhancements	There have been several enhancements to Windows 98 Beta 3 with respect to PCMCIA technology including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Support for PC Card32 (Cardbus): Cardbus brings 32-bit performance to the small PC Card form factor. It enables notebooks to implement high-bandwidth applications like video capture and 100Mbps networking.* Support for PC Cards that operate at 3.3 Volts: This enables

	<p>hardware manufacturers to lower the power consumption of their devices by using 3.3V rather than 5V.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Support for Multifunction PC Cards: Allows two or more functions (such as LAN and Modem, or SCSI and sound) on a single physical PC Card. Supporting Multifunction Cards helps decrease the cost-per-function of PC Cards, and makes better use of the precious number of slots on most PCs permitting more functions per PC.
Built-In Support for Infrared Data Association (IrDA)	<p>Windows 98 Beta 3 includes support for IrDA, the Infrared Data Association standard for wireless connectivity. IrDA support enables Windows 98 Beta 3 users to easily connect to peripheral devices or other PCs without using connecting cables. This driver set provides infrared-equipped laptop or desktop computers with the capability of networking, transferring files, and printing wirelessly with other IrDA-compatible infrared devices.</p>
Distributed Component Object Model (DCOM)	<p>The Component Object Model (COM) allows software developers to create component applications. Now, Distributed COM (DCOM) in Windows 98 Beta 3 (and Windows NT 4.0) provides the infrastructure that allows DCOM applications (the technology formally known as Network OLE) to communicate across networks without needing to redevelop applications.</p>
Client Support for NetWare Directory Services (NDS)	<p>Windows 98 Beta 3 includes Client Services for NetWare that support Novell NetWare Directory Services (NDS). This enables Windows 98 Beta 3 users to log on to Novell NetWare 4.x servers running NDS to access files and print resources. This service provides the key features that Novell users need, such as: NDS authentication, ability to browse NDS resources, ability to print to NDS print queues, and full support for processing NetWare login scripts, NDS property pages, and NDS passwords.</p>
32-bit Data Link Control (DLC)	<p>The Data Link Control (DLC) protocol is used primarily to access IBM mainframe and IBM AS/400 computers. The 32-bit DLC protocol software built-in to Windows 98 Beta 3 enables a network</p>

administrator to add support for 32-bit
and 16-bit DLC programs.

Microsoft Plus! 98

The Ideal Companion for Windows 98

Microsoft. Plus! 98 complements Windows. 98 with enhancements that let you work and play with your computer like never before. You can get the latest virus fixes, optimize your hard disk, choose new desktop themes, and challenge your game skills.

Powerful System Utilities:

McAfee VirusScan

File Cleaner

Start Menu Cleaner

Compressed Folders

More Fun and Better Looking:

Desktop Themes

Deluxe CD Player

Picture It!. Express

Spider Solitaire

McAfee VirusScan

- * Defend your computer against viruses with this top-selling anti-virus program. If VirusScan 3.1.6 discovers a virus, you can quickly and easily use VirusScan to remove it before other files are infected. You can run VirusScan to diagnose a file you've shared or downloaded from the Internet.
- * Receive six months of free updates. As new viruses are identified, you can download VirusScan updates free of charge.
- * Integrated with Windows 98 Maintenance Wizard to schedule virus scanning automatically.

File Cleaner

- * Get the most out of your hard drive by clearing unnecessary files. The File Cleaner integrates with the Windows 98 Disk Cleanup feature to optimize free space on your hard drive. When you need more disk space to run a program or store needed files, the File Cleaner has easy-to-use color codes to help you determine how often you use files. The Advice tab gives you detailed information about file types and whether they are critical to your system.

Start Menu Cleaner

* Check your Start Menu for invalid shortcuts and empty folders. If a folder contains only one program or file, it is moved up a level so you can more quickly locate and open it. The Start Menu Cleaner also helps you quickly fix broken links.

* Schedule regular maintenance of your Start Menu. Start Menu Cleaner integrates with the Windows 98 Maintenance Wizard, so you can organize your Start Menu regularly.

Compressed Folders

* Create compressed folders with just a few clicks, and then drag and drop files and programs into them to reduce their size by up to 90 percent. Compressed folders act and look like any other folder on your system, so you can view file properties, determine and set password protection, and see the compression percentage of each file.

* Use Compression Folders to archive files, share files over the Internet, or copy files onto a floppy disk. To save disk space, you can run programs and view documents in the compressed folder without extracting them.

* Increase your security by using password protection for individual files in compressed folders. Users can view your compressed folders with any compression program only if you give them the password.

Desktop Themes

* Add new colors, pictures, and humor to your desktop by choosing one of the new series of desktop themes. You can choose from Fashion, Science Fiction, World Travel, Falling Leaves, and more. Or surround yourself with the humor of Cathy, Doonesbury, FoxTrot, and Garfield cartoons. Perhaps you prefer the beauty of Corbis Photography, or the child of the Universal Studios Horror Theme.

* Customize your wallpaper, window colors, screen saver, sounds, mouse pointers, and more! Some of the themes have animated 3D screen savers.

* Can't decide? Then rotate desktop themes automatically every month! You can always go back to a favorite theme later.

* Interact with dialog boxes, icons, and sounds that are customized according to the theme you select for a more enhanced computing experience.

Deluxe CD Player

* Play your favorite CD and, with an Internet connection, instantly identify the artist, CD and track titles. This happens automatically, and the information is stored on your hard drive for the next time you play that CD.

* Learn more about the music you enjoy. Visit linked Internet sites such as Music Boulevard, Billboards, and Tunes Network to help you search for information about the artist, read about music-related issues, and purchase CDs.

Picture It! Express

* Manipulate and convert images with Picture It! Express, a basic version of Microsoft Picture

It! Use a scanner or digital image to acquire images. With Picture It! Express, you can

crop, rotate, and flip images, soften edges, adjust contrast, and even get rid of "red eye"

from your favorite photographs.

* With a compatible scanner, Picture It! Express can automatically locate your image, crop it, and correct brightness and contrast.

* To print your image, you can choose from a variety of standard photographic print sizes or customize your print size.

Lose Your Marbles

* Play Lose Your Marbles, SegaSoft's top-rated game, and see why it was awarded four and a

half stars by Computer Gaming World. To win, remove the marbles from your board while adding

more marbles to your opponent's board. You can move the rows up and down, and you can rotate

marbles within a row. This is a fast-paced, challenging puzzle that keeps you on your toes.

Spider Solitaire

* Deal a hand to play the most challenging game of solitaire yet. Spider Solitaire uses two

decks of cards. To win, you must use all of the cards to create eight rows of cards in

ascending order from aces to kings. It is possible to win this game-can you do it? Here's a

hint: try to empty as many slots on the board as possible within the first three deals.

A T T E N T I O N ** A T T E N T I O N ** A T T E N T I O N

[Image]

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A T T E N T I O N ** A T T E N T I O N ** A T T E N T I O N

EDUPAGE STR Focus Keeping the users informed

[Image]

Edupage

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Encryption Policy A Failure

Intel To Cut 3000 Jobs

Good

MICROSOFT BUYS FIREFLY FOR ITS PRIVACY TECHNOLOGY

Microsoft has acquired Firefly Network Inc., a spinoff of the MIT Media Lab in Cambridge, Mass., and plans to move Firefly's 70 employees to Microsoft headquarters in Redmond, Washington. Using artificial intelligence techniques, Firefly developed technologies for both data filtering and privacy. Its filtering technology provides a method for comparing a computer user's observed tastes, preferences and behavior to that of other users on whom similar data have been collected -- and then, based on those comparisons, making recommendations on such things as books and movies that the user would probably like. Its privacy technology is intended to give

computer users control over the personal information collected by Web sites, and to support the new privacy standard called P3P (Platform for Privacy Preferences Project) now being developed by the World Wide Web Consortium, an Internet standards group. Microsoft says it is interested mainly in Firefly's privacy technology rather than its filtering technology, but acknowledges that "our plans are a little squishy now." Privacy advocates are expressing concern that integration of Firefly technology into Microsoft's Internet Explorer software for browsing the Web would significantly expand the scope of personal information that can be tracked on individuals using the Internet. (New York Times 10 Apr

JUDGE DECLARES NSF DOMAIN FUND ILLEGAL

A U.S. district court judge said Wednesday that the \$30 Intellectual Infrastructure Fee charged as part of the Internet domain name registration process has been illegally collected, because it was never approved by Congress. "Congress may have intended to grant NSF the authority to collect the assessment, but it has not yet done so," wrote the judge. "Congress must pass legislation that more explicitly conveys its intentions." More than \$45 million had been collected in the fund before it was phased out at the beginning of this month. The judge's ruling came in response to a lawsuit filed on behalf of the American Internet Registrants Association. Twenty-three million dollars of the fund was slated to go to the Next Generation Internet project, which funds universities' and research institutions' connections to a super high-speed backbone network. The plaintiffs in the case plan to petition the court for class-action status, which would allow them to ask that the entire fund be returned to all domain name holders. (Net Insider 9 Apr 98)

BANKS FORM GROUP TO ADDRESS YEAR 2000 CONCERNS

An international group of major banking institutions, including Citicorp, Barclay's Bank, Deutsche Bank, Bank of Tokyo and Hong Kong Bank, has banded together to develop a set of guidelines for addressing the Year 2000 problem. The Global 2000 Coordinating Group's guidelines will be distributed throughout the banking industry by managers and regulators. The group plans to look at financial issues, such as cash-payment systems, securities clearance and custody systems, stocks, bond futures, commodity exchanges, foreign currency exchanges, and derivative trading. It will also attempt to gauge the readiness of industries linked to the economic infrastructure, such as utilities and transportation groups. (Information Week 9 Apr 98)

DELL SHUNS DISCOUNT LABEL

Dell Computer doesn't just want to be known as a discount computer company any more. "We have value to offer that is not price-based," says the company's vice chairman. Dell has built its reputation on its direct sales approach, which allows it to sell computers for 10% to 20% less than comparable models in stores. With competitors like Compaq and IBM trying to emulate their business model, Dell now wants to emphasize that there are other good reasons to buy its machines. Meanwhile, Dell is hoping to transact 50% of its sales over the Internet by the end of 2000, which will enable it to maintain an attractive price differential with regard to rival companies. (Wall Street Journal 10 Apr 98)

DIGITAL TALKING HEADS

A newly launched employee leasing firm is taking a decidedly virtual approach to filling jobs. Using technology developed at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Digital Personnel Inc. offers businesses a stable of virtual employees -- photo-realistic, computerized talking heads to use for fielding complaints or taking product orders through the Internet. "We offer ready-to-talk talking heads to companies," says DPI's owner. "I

see it as a natural evolutionary next step for the Internet. If you think about how every time you go to look up the Web page of a company, you'd much rather talk with someone than read a bunch of text. It's the difference between reading the telephone book and asking someone what the number is... I can't imagine any company not wanting their Web site to have a human interface, whether it's the IRS or Home Shopping Network." The talking heads can be pre-programmed with canned responses to frequently asked questions, or operate as a facade for an artificial intelligent agent, or even serve as photogenic masks for human customer reps. (Tampa Bay Business Journal 6 Apr 98)

MICHIGAN INTRODUCES \$30 MILLION EDUCATION/TECHNOLOGY PLAN

Michigan Governor John Engler has proposed a plan to give 100 grants of \$10,000 each to schools, libraries and community centers to fund computer equipment, Internet access, and teacher training on the use of computers, as well as 200 grants of up to \$10,000 to teachers who have creative plans for integrating technology into the classroom. The plan also calls for the creation of a state virtual university. (Government Technology Apr 98)

IS WIRED TIRED?

Trying to explain why Wired magazine and parent company Wired Ventures have been unable to find new investors to take over the magazine, media analysts are suggesting that it's simply a case of Wired having become old news. Fortune magazine quotes one media executive saying: "Wired made the nerd hip. But now that everyone's online, what's its cachet?" (Forbes 20 Apr 98)

POMPOSITY IN, POMPOSITY OUT

Reviewing a new book by the literary critic George Steiner, Anthony Gottlieb writes: "He is scathingly skeptical about computer translation: it will never, he thinks, be able to emulate our linguistic gifts. To see how bad these programs really are, I fed some of Steiner's sentences into an English-German translation program, then fed them back into a German-English one. The results were not impressive: 'After the axiomatic moment ontological of the confidence, attack comes,' was one. On the other hand, since Steiner's original was, 'After the axiomatic moment of ontological trust, comes aggression,' I'm not sure it's entirely the machine's fault." (New York Times Book Review 12 Apr 98)

QWEST ANNOUNCES INTERNET2 GRANT

Qwest Communications International of Denver, Col., is donating \$500 million worth of transmission services to a consortium of research universities working on the Internet2 project. The project is linked to the Clinton administration's Next Generation Internet initiative. The Qwest network initially will have a transmission speed of 10 gigabits per second. Cisco Systems and Nortel will also provide an indeterminate amount of hardware for the project. Meanwhile, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency says it will provide \$50 million in grants to universities and federal research facilities to develop technologies designed to support the high-speed network. (Washington Post 14 Apr 98)

AT&T NETWORK PROBLEM

"Serious interruptions" on AT&T's high-speed fiber optic data network began Monday afternoon and caused problems for hundreds of multinational banks, travel agencies, insurance and credit card companies. The problem appeared to be the result of software errors. (USA Today 14 Apr 98)

SECURITY FLAW

A software developer and two UC-Berkeley graduate students have found a flaw in GSM digital cellular phone technology that could be used to obtain free phone service by a hacker in possession of the credit card-like device used with the phones. However, since the security code can not be extracted unless a thief has physical possession of that device (the SIM card, standing for Subscriber Identification Module), experts say the problem will have negligible impact. It is currently of interest mainly because the new digital systems, unlike the older analog ones, were believed to be virtually tamperproof. (Wall Street Journal 13 Apr 98)

U.S. LEADS ON YEAR 2000 READINESS

While industry observers decry the lack of initiative on the part of U.S. companies to prepare computerized systems for the transition to the next millennium, the rest of the world is in much worse shape. For instance, only 8% of German companies have a formal program to deal with the problem, as opposed to 80% of large U.S. firms. And one in five French companies hasn't begun to overhaul its information systems, according to a 1997 Ernst & Young study. Meanwhile, the former Eastern Bloc countries are suffering a dearth of programmers because many have been lured to high-wage nations such as the U.S., and some Asian nations may be laboring under a false sense of security because they believe their systems, which are programmed to recognize traditional cultural calendars, are immune. "Their understanding of the problem is, 'It's not such a big deal, we'll cope with it at the end.' Now they've got no options." (USA Today 13 Apr 98)

CHATTERBOTS COULD CUT "HOLD" TIME TO ZERO

Artificial intelligence software programmed to provide a human-like interface could soon be put to work on the Web, answering product questions or completing order forms. Gateway 2000 wants to add these "chatterbots" to its Web site to answer technical questions: "It could be a great way to automate support so people don't have to wait on hold," says a Gateway technology manager. "It's one of our top priorities." Chatterbot software works by first analyzing questions and then placing them into categories. An answer is then formulated from a repository of software code, called a script. (Investor's Business Daily 13 Apr 98)

SGI BASES TURNAROUND STRATEGY ON INTEL AGREEMENT

Silicon Graphics Inc. is putting the finishing touches on a broad cross-licensing agreement with Intel that will allow the struggling computer maker to develop custom chips inside its Intel-based machines to enable faster performance and better graphics than competing models. In return, Intel will be able to design its own graphics technology into future chips without fear

of lawsuits from SGI. Meanwhile, SGI plans to concentrate its efforts on producing new computers called Visual PCs and spinning off its MIPS microprocessor unit into a subsidiary that might eventually be a separate company. (Wall Street Journal 13 Apr 98)

THE STATE OF JOURNALISM AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

A vice president of the Tribune Company, which owns the Chicago Tribune and other newspapers, has issued a memo warning the company's reporters and other staff: "The company reserves the right to access, review and monitor your electronic mail communications and computer usage for any business purpose. Be aware that the company has the capability to retrieve computer information, including messages employees send or receive and Internet sites accessed through the company's computer system." (Washington Post 13 Apr 98)

GTE PLANS BIG ADSL ROLLOUT

GTE says it will begin a large-scale deployment of asymmetric digital subscriber line (ADSL) service beginning in June. "This is the largest announcement on ADSL deployment to date," says the president of GTE Network Services, who adds that the market for data services is expected to balloon to \$400 billion in the next decade, up from \$100 billion in 1995. The high-speed service is expected to cost \$30 a month, not including Internet-access fees, installation fees and monthly equipment charges of \$12. (Wall Street Journal 13 Apr 98)

WEB USERS WANT TO BE LEFT ANONYMOUS

Vanderbilt University researchers Donna Hoffman, Tom Novak, and Marcos Peralta (<http://www2000.ogsm.vanderbilt.edu/>) say that 94% of Web users surveyed have refused to provide information to a Web site, and 40% have given fake information. (New York Times 13 Apr 98)

AT&T NETWORK FAILURE TAKES A TOLL ON COMMERCE

The failure earlier this week of AT&T's national high-speed network didn't affect conventional or cellular telephone service, but did manage to disrupt the portion of the network that carries data for transactions involving credit cards, bank accounts, travel reservations and the like. "This sort of thing is going to happen infrequently, but more and more in the future," says the managing director of the Yankee Group. "And it makes you realize how vital to the lifeblood of the economy these complex computer networks have become." There is no way to gauge how many transactions were forfeited as a result of the blackout, but analysts are saying the losses are likely huge, with thousands of businesses affected. (New York Times 15 Apr 98)

IBM'S NOT SELLING COMPUTERS, IT'S SELLING "E-BUSINESS TOOLS"

IBM has been telling customers that their future lies in electronic business, but up until now, it's been unclear how Big Blue plans to capitalize on that trend. Now it's announced a \$100-million yearlong global advertising campaign based on the slogan, "The Work Matters. The People Matter. The Tools Matter." IBM plans to repackage its laptops, PCs and other computers as

"e-business tools," on the theory that the strategy will differentiate it from competitors who focus on price and features. "By positioning every IBM product as part of e-business, they strengthen their ability to compete against other hardware and software companies," says a senior analyst at Zona Research. (Wall Street Journal 15 Apr 98)

COMMERCE SECRETARY CALLS U.S. ENCRYPTION POLICY A FAILURE

Distancing the Commerce Department from the position held by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Commerce Secretary William M. Daley says that the Clinton Administration's controls on encryption technology are hurting America's ability to compete with other countries. "There are solutions out there. Solutions that would meet some of law enforcement's needs without compromising the concerns of the privacy and business communities. But I fear our search has thus far been more symbolic than sincere... The cost of our failure will be high. The ultimate result will be foreign dominance of the market. This means a loss of jobs here, and products that do not meet either our law enforcement or national security needs." (New York Times 16 Apr 98)

DIGITAL ISN'T FOREVER

"Digital information lasts forever, or five years -- whichever comes first," says a senior computer scientist at RAND Corp. The problem is that computer experts are finding out that under less-than-optimal conditions, digital tapes and disks, including CD-ROMs, can deteriorate in as little as five to 10 years. And the decay, although it happens gradually, isn't evident until it's too late, says the founder of Voyager Co., which makes commercial CD-ROM books and games. "CDs have a tendency to degrade much faster than anybody, at least in the companies that make them, is willing to predict." At the same time, as data is ported from an antiquated platform to a newer system, often there are bits that fail to make the transition. Sometimes it's just a matter of footnotes disappearing, but sometimes whole categories of data are lost. "It's like playing the child's game of Telephone. It doesn't take many translations from one media to another before you have lost significant aspects of the original data." (Business Week 20 Apr 98)

INTEL UNVEILS "BASIC PC" CHIPS

Intel is moving aggressively into the "basic PC" chip market with the introduction of its new Celeron chips. The move is seen as an attempt by the chipmaker to protect itself in the low-end market that up until now it has largely ignored, focusing instead on high-speed microprocessors that power PCs in the \$2,000 and up range. Competitors Advanced Micro Devices and National Semiconductor together already claim a 25% market share in the basic PC chip segment. Analysts say the Celeron chips, which are based on the same design as Intel's best-selling Pentium II chips but lack a memory device that feeds data more quickly to the microprocessor, are slower than competing models. Intel plans to introduce new versions of the Celeron later in the year that will include the memory device and have significantly higher performance. (Financial Times 15 Apr 98)

INTEL TO CUT 3000 JOBS

Intel Corp. says it plans to cut 3,000 jobs as part of its strategy to maintain dominance in an industry that is experiencing a drop in prices at the same time that the rate of growth is slowing. Intel also says it will reduce R&D and capital spending by about 5%. The company plans to achieve its staff reduction over the next six months, primarily through attrition. Chairman and CEO Andy Grove says he believes the recent downturn is part of a cyclical trend that will see revenues rising again in the next few years. (Washington Post 15 Apr 98)

GOOD NEWS FOR APPLE

Apple Computer has surprised Wall Street by reporting quarterly earnings that are more than double what most analysts had expected. Lou Mazzuchelli of Gerard Klauer Mattison & Co. says: "The company has proven they know how to clean up the house internally and make good products," but added that "this quarter doesn't answer completely yet when they can regain growth." (Wall Street Journal 16 Apr 98)

INTERNET GROWTH

A study by the U.S. Commerce Department (<http://ecommerce.gov/>) says that traffic on the Internet is doubling every hundred days and predicts that electronic commerce will grow to \$300 billion a year by 2002. (USA Today 16 Apr 96)

[Image]

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[Image]

"It doesn't get any better"

Adobe ImageReady Makes It Easy and Quick for Creative People to Optimize Their Work for the Web

Beta Version is Now Available

San Jose, Calif., (April 13, 1998) (Nasdaq:ADBE) - Adobe believes the Web should unleash people's creativity, not hamper it. Adobe ImageReady 1.0, introduced today by Adobe Systems Incorporated, is a software program certain to make the Web a more colorful and accessible place. As a powerful and flexible image-processing tool, ImageReady streamlines the Web design and editing process, providing designers an easy and quick way to prepare images for the Web.

Until now, Web designers had little choice but to spend endless hours trying to figure out how a graphic would look on their Web site when seen with a different browser or computer. They needed to use several software programs to cobble together their site. Typically, they did not learn until after they completed a graphic, how long it would take for the image to download. The technical burden took the fun and excitement out of designing visually interesting Web graphics. ImageReady software, along with Adobe's award winning graphics applications like Adobe PhotoshopR and Adobe Illustrator, changes that.

Adobe ImageReady enables Web designers to make smart and quick decisions as to how they want their artwork to appear on the Web. ImageReady empowers designers to balance the tradeoffs between file size and image quality. "In the past it was all trial and error," says Bart Dority, creative director of DynaMind, a new media company in Manhattan. "As you work with ImageReady you can see a preview of how the file will look on the Web, how large the file size is and how long it will take to download. It saves an amazing amount of

time."

Adobe's latest image-editing software is about to perk up online commerce. Potential e-commerce customers who log onto commercial Web sites often lose patience or jump to another site when all they see are little boxes that say GIF or JPEG. ImageReady's LiveView window lets a business minimize this wait time for customers. "Now we can give a business a better estimate of exactly how long it will take a potential e-commerce customer to download any image on their Web site," says Dority. "That's another service we can now provide our clients."

Adobe ImageReady works seamlessly with Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator software. That is a big plus for Kazia Sealy, who works on an employee intranet site at Time Inc. "As a graphic designer and illustrator," says Sealy, "I want to concentrate on the art, not the technical stuff." With Adobe's award-winning software, designers can create original artwork in Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator and then work with Adobe ImageReady to prepare the highest-quality, best looking Web sites.

Adobe ImageReady helps creative people focus on what they do best-designing great graphics, not mastering complicated computer programs. "At DynaMind, our staff is made up of designers, not computer specialists," says Dority. "It's great being able to give them a new tool that looks and operates like Photoshop," which, he says, all of his designers already know how to use.

For firms like DynaMind whose Web clients include several Fortune 500 firms, ImageReady software's features can save days of repetitive work. "Creating a Web site for a large client can involve designing hundreds of

graphics," says Dority. But once he finds the right compression setting for a single image, he is able to use ImageReady's automation capability to apply that same setting to every other graphic on his site. Of the Droplets feature, Dority says: "It literally lets me do a day's worth of work in seconds."

Among ImageReady software's other timesaving and creative features are its ability to:

remove the guess work from choosing between image quality and file size

add more impact to a Web site with animated GIFs by using the built-in animation palette

save time optimizing graphics by previewing them using the browser dither capability

Pricing and Availability

Adobe ImageReady is priced at \$299 and is expected to ship second quarter 1998. A public preview version of the product is available through July at <http://www.adobe.com>

About Adobe Systems Incorporated

Based in San Jose, Calif., Adobe Systems Incorporated develops and supports products to help people express and use information in more imaginative and meaningful ways, across all print and electronic media. Founded in 1982, Adobe helped launch the desktop publishing revolution. Today, the company offers a market-leading line of application software and type products for creating and distributing visually rich communication materials; licenses its industry-standard technologies to major hardware manufacturers, software developers, and service providers; and offers integrated software solutions to businesses of all sizes. For more information, see Adobe's home page at <http://www.adobe.com> on the World Wide Web.

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[Image]

Kids Computing Corner

Frank Sereno, Editor

fsereno@streport.com

We're working on one....

[Image]

Jasons Jive

[Image]

Jason Sereno, STR Staff
jsereno@streport.com

See ya next week!

April 15, 1998

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jerry Tardif

888/624-6429

jrt@thewebtools.com

New Search Sleuth Unveiled for Internet 'Power Users'

VERMILLION, SD -- The WebTools Company (TWTC) announced the commercial release of Mata Hari, a desktop search tool for knowledge workers, professionals and others researching information on the Internet. The software extends features found in current metasearcher, offline browser, filter and document management products. TWTC states Mata Hari is a unique, next-generation search solution for the growing document overload of the Internet.

"We designed what became Mata Hari to solve our own Internet search frustrations," said Michael Bergman, chairman of TWTC and its parent, VisualMetrics Corporation. "The enthusiastic response of early users told us we had stumbled on a real market need." VisualMetrics established TWTC as a wholly-owned subsidiary in late summer 1997 for the sole purpose of commercializing Internet tools.

Users submit queries through Mata Hari to Internet search engines such as Yahoo, Hotbot, Alta Vista or Excite. Mata Hari retrieves the actual documents identified by the engines, removes duplicates, and then filters, scores, indexes and stores results in a desktop database. Searches can be immediate, work in the background, or run during off hours when Internet connections may be faster.

According to the company, "Mata Hari translates all dialects of search engine, cutting through the hundreds of millions of documents on the Internet to find the exact results desired." Users can further search and manipulate the results databases using all of Mata Haris features.

Users can pose multiple queries at the same time, in simple sentences or using structured (AND, OR) syntax. Queries can include phrases ("my oh my") and wildcards.

Users can search from one to all of the 100 supported engines, which may return potentially thousands of Web link references. Mata Hari evaluates these against the queries and flexible site and document filtering settings chosen by the user. Final, accepted results can be as large as 1,000 complete Web documents and 65,000 unique terms.

Mata Hari can download up to 120 engine listings or documents simultaneously, leading to rapid search times and an end to the search-click-wait-download-review delays of conventional searching. Users can also submit existing Web pages with links such as bookmark listings or the results from previous Mata Hari searches as the source for Internet retrievals.

The software automatically scores documents using multiple methods. Users may rerank all documents based on those identified as matching desired results. They can select and fine-hone results by single or multiple terms, documents, queries or the source search engines using Mata Haris advanced set capabilities.

Users may view documents in their Internet browser during download or later from the database, or via a quick view local viewer. They can send partial or complete results listings as a Web page to the browser for printing, e-mailing to others, or archiving.

Users may annotate, delete and sort documents, or search the databases with different queries. Mata Hari provides robust download progress messages, document status icons, user messages and error-trapping. TWTC distributes a comprehensive help system with the software.

"Don't be fooled by the small size of Mata Hari," said Jerry Tardif, TWTC's president, "software performance is extremely fast and powerful." He added, "We believe our advanced technology has raised the competitive bar many notches." Tardif cited a potential Internet search tool market of \$350 million to \$450 million by the year 2000, the exponential growth and increasing fragmentation of the Web, and established vendors as fueling this competition. "But, to a person, our early users tell us they can now find information they were never able to find before," he said.

Mata Hari is a Windows NT or Win95 application. It is being distributed and supported solely via the Internet. Its price is \$79.95. The complete version 1.01 software may be downloaded for a free 30-day evaluation at: <http://thewebtools.com>

The WebTools Company is devoted exclusively to providing user-intelligent tools for the Internet. Mata Hari is its first product. TWTCs Web site policy is to keep all consumer information confidential, to not issue cookies, and to support Internet anti-spamming and privacy efforts.

VisualMetrics is a closely-held software company founded in January 1995 with strengths in data management, analysis and decision support tools, software language translation, software portation, and platform-independent designs.

[Image]

Special Notice!! STR Infofile File format for Articles

File Format for STReport

All articles submitted to STReport for publication must be sent in the following format. Please use the format requested. Any files received that do not conform will not be used. The article must be in an importable word processor format for Word 6.0 and/or Word Perfect 7. The margins are .05" left and 1.0" Monospaced fonts are not to be used. Please use proportional fonting only and at Twelve (12) points.

- * No Indenting on any paragraphs!!
- * No Indenting of any lines or "special gimmicks"
- * No underlining!
- * Columns shall be achieved through the use of tabs only. Or, columns in Word or Word Perfect format. Do NOT, under any circumstances, use the space bar.
- * Most of all. PLEASE! No ASCII "ART"!!
- * There is no limits as to size, articles may be split into two if lengthy
- * Actual Artwork should be in GIF, PCX, JPG, TIF, BMP, WMF file formats
- * Artwork (pictures, graphs, charts, etc.)should be sent along with the article separately
- * Please use a single font in an article. TTF Times New Roman 12pt. is preferred. (VERY Strong Hint)

If there are any questions please use either E-Mail or call. On another note the ASCII version of STReport has reached the "end of the line" As the major

Online Services moved away from ASCII. So has STReport. All in the name of progress and improved readability. The amount of reader mail expressing a preference for HTML as opposed to our Adobe PDF enhanced issue is running approximately 11 to 1 over the PDF edition. Cited are size, graphic quality and speed of download. I might add however, the requests for our issues to be

done in HTML far outnumber PDF. So it too, like ascii, is gone. HTML is now a reality. On our web download page is a selection for HTML (Read or Download). As you can see, STReport will not be caught in the old, worn out "downward compatibility dodge" we must move forward.

Many grateful thanks in advance for your enthusiastic co-operation and input.

Ralph F. Mariano, Editor
rmariano@streport.com
STReport International Online Magazine

The Linux Advocate

Column #10 - April 16th, 1998

by Scott Dowdle

dowdle@icstech.com

<http://www.icstech.com/~dowdle>

LOGIN:

First of all, I'd like to appologize for the lack of columns the last couple of weeks. I did deliver a column to Ralph for last week, but he forgot to put it in... so I've updated the news section and resubmitted. The whole Linux Weekly News site reproduction in STR deal fell apart. The LWN folks have the goal of going banner ad someday to help pay for the site... and they felt reproducing it in STR on a weekly basis would diminish the value of the site... and I can certainly understand that. Any event, they did mention to me that they don't have any exclusivity rights to the material/content they present there and suggested that I could use their content as a template for my own. That sounds like a great idea. :)

What follows is a list of the three best Linux related news and info sites that I've found.

<http://slashdot.org> is the "News for Nerds. Stuff that counts" site. It is updated several times daily and is basically a user contributed site, but oddly enough, slashdot.org is THE BEST computer industry news site I've found to date... and if you don't check it out every day, you can quickly fall behind.

<http://www.freshmeat.net> is the best site I've found for Linux software news. Freshmeat provides information on new and updated software for Linux. It is updated at least once a day so check there often.

<http://www.eklektix.com/lwn/> is the Linux Weekly News site and a new edition is published every Thursday. LWN is a digest of information from various sites including the two previously mentioned and more.

Linux News

Item #1 - Linux Devel Kernel - Hmm, let's see... the 2.1.9x development Linux kernel has been updated about 3 or 4 times since my last column... and at the time of writing was at 2.1.96. As it reaches 2.1.99 the push to turn it into the new production kernel (2.2.0) will be stronger... so 2.2.0 shouldn't be that far away... maybe a few weeks or a couple of months... you never know.

Item #2 - GIMP updates - The GIMP has been updated several times as it approaches 1.0. The release version at the time of writing is 0.99.26. GTK (the GUI API library which GIMP is written with) was released as 1.0 so how far away can GIMP 1.0 be? I'm guessing a week or two.

Item #3 - MS Gets Busted - Microsoft has been in the news a lot lately. I'm not sure if the following report is mentioned elsewhere in this issue of STR or not, as it hasn't gotten very much press coverage since the initial story. Anyway, the L.A. Times broke the story last Friday about Microsoft and a "just business" PR plan that has many in the industry irritated. I'll not going to offer an editorial on the issue because I think it speaks for itself... although I do term this as Microsoft's latest "scandal." :) Check out the following URL:

http://www.latimes.com/HOME/NEWS/BUSINESS/UPDATES/lat_microsoft0410.htm

Item #4 - Dvorak comments - John C. Dvorak is the only industry columnist that I've seen mention the L.A. times article and he makes some rather interesting comments on the matter. Mr. Dvorak's column entitled, "CAUGHT IN THE ACT," may be found at the following URL:

<http://www.zdnet.com/pcmag/insites/dvorak/jd.htm>

Item #5 - PERL Creator Interview - There is an online interview with Larry Wall (creator and primary author of PERL) at the following URL:
<http://www.techweb.com/wire/story/TWB19980408S0020>

An audio version of the Larry Wall interview is available in RealAudio format at the following URLs.

http://cmp-test.web.cerf.net/realcontent/eval/wall/wall_144.ram OR

http://cmp-test.web.cerf.net/realcontent/eval/wall/wall_288.ram

Item #6 - NPR Covers Linux - National Public Radio did an 8 minute story on Linux recently and a RealAudio recording of the broadcast is avialable at the following URL: <http://www.npr.org/ramfiles/980408.atc.14.ram>

Item #7 - Interview with Linus - Linus Torvalds (father of Linux) was recently interviewed in the online pages of InfoWorld magazine. The article was

entitled, "Linus Torvalds talks economics and operating systems." It can be found at the following URL:

<http://www.infoworld.com/cgi-bin/displayStory.pl?/interviews/980409torvalds.htm>

Item #8 - New Qt agreement - Qt is the GUI API library that the KDE (reviewed below) development team picked to build KDE with. Qt is a freely available, commercial GUI API library from Troll Tech (<http://www.troll.no>) and there has been much debate about the licensing agreement that the Troll Tech people have for Qt... so much debate that the Free Software Foundation decided to use GTK (a rival GUI API library that has a much less restrictive license and used to build such products as GIMP) to start development on an alternative to KDE called GNOME (<http://www.gnome.org>). Hopefully, with this new licensing agreement, Qt will be more widely accepted in the halls of Open Source software. This agreement is said to "guarantee the availability of Qt for free software development now and in the future." You can find the official announcement at the following URL: <http://www.kde.org/kdeqtfoundation.html>

...and LASTLY - There were SO MANY news items in the last three weeks that I've really only skimmed the surface so readers are urged to check Slashdot's archives as well as the Linux Weekly News site.

Linux Application Spotlight - KDE aka K Desktop Environment

What's KDE? Well, it is a complete GUI environment built for the X Window System. I've mentioned in the past that X isn't constrained by any one Window Manager. I've been relatively lazy with regards to exploring alternative Window

Managers for X and have stuck with Red Hat Linux's default Window Manager configuration called AnotherLevel which is patterned very much after Microsoft Windows 95. When I heard about KDE, I immediately visited their WWW site to learn all about it and I have to admit that the screenshots seemed too good to be true... and the fact that it wasn't completed yet and in beta release lead me to believe that it couldn't be very usable in its current form... so I went and FTPed all of the .rpm's for it and just let it sit on my hard drive for weeks. Well, I finally got around to installing it. I thought it would be a pain to install but given the fact that it came in Red Hat's RPM format made it

almost a no-brainer. After installing the basic packages I did have to do a little config file editing... for example, I had to tell my startx setup that I wanted to load KDE as my default window manager. That kind of stuff is to be expected. In any event, the KDE folks have a pretty complete Installation Guide on their WWW site. You can find KDE info at the following URL:
<http://www.kde.org>

Ok, so I installed KDE... so now for a review. First of all, calling KDE (Kool Desktop Environment) or K Desktop a "Window Manager" is pretty much a misnomer.

KDE is more of an alternative to Windows 95 as it comes with a slew of applications and the whole KDE design is to use a common widget library so that all KDE applications look alike, can share resources (like font selector, color selector, file/item selector, etc) and communicate with each other. One of the goals behind KDE is that the GUI interface should be well designed, flexible, robust, and not require any config/text file editing. KDE is designed to be

like the MacOS, Windows 95 and OS/2... totally configurable in an object oriented and graphical way. I was very, very skeptical about KDE's ability to pull the whole thing off but now in all honesty I must admit that my jaw dropped open when I saw it come up for the first time... and my jaw keep right on dropping for the first few hours of using the K Desktop and all of the various applications included with it. I'm not going to attempt to give a complete review in this installment of Linux Advocate. This week's spotlight is just an introduction to what KDE is.

If I had to describe what KDE is like, I'd have to say it is similar to Windows 98... or should I say, what Windows 98 is said to be like... since it isn't out yet... but there are plenty of Win98 testers out there (right Ralph?). KDE is "network transparent" and KFM (KDE's File Manager) handles local files and remote files (via http:// and ftp://) the same. The good thing about KDE is that it adds all of the functionality of MacOS, OS/2, and Windows 98 type designs within the framework of the X Window System. While I have a very specific concept with that last statement, I'm sure a lot of you readers are lost since you probably haven't used X before. As a result, over the span of KDE Spotlights I'm going to explain some of the basic X functionality that KDE exploits right along with everything else.

This week I'll provide a few screenshots of the desktop environment as well as some screenshots of a few of the applications included with KDE. I'm sure a lot of the windows will look very familiar to everyone. :)

First of all, I upgraded my desktop computer to a Pentium 200MMX with a Diamond Stealth 3D 2000 Pro video card and 32MB of RAM. That's a fairly common configuration among newer systems and some might say it's under-powered. :) Anyway, my point is that the screenshots are of a 800 x 600 screen in 16-bit color.

[Image]

This is a shot of desktop "One" with a file browser open. At the bottom of the screen you will see the "task bar" and the "panel." The task bar should be self explanatory. The panel is sort of a Super version of Windows' START button. The little icons on the panel are very similar to Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.x's ability to put shortcuts (I'm not sure if I am using the correct terminology here) on the taskbar... for those who are familiar with that. The buttons labeled One, Two, Three, and Four in the middle of the panel refer to the active Desktop or "virtual screen." You see, in the X Window System environment on Unix/Linux, most Window Managers support what is called a virtual screen (a screen that is larger than the physical display) and they generally partition it off into "panes" or desktops that can be instantly switched to. The good thing about virtual desktops and panes is that you can have lots of applications open without having to do all of the window juggling that you'd have to do if you were limited to displaying them on one screen. You'll notice that the currently active desktop (or pane) is related to the depressed button in the middle of the panel. KDE supports from 1 to 8 panes but the default (as

shown) is 4. The buttons can be given whatever name you want but by default they are simply called One, Two, etc. In KDE each pane can have it's own background color/wallpaper setting, it's own panel and taskbar display settings, etc. KDE is so rich with configurable options I'm not even going to start on them. Let's just say that the pane and the task bar have configurable settings.

Ok, getting back to screen One, you'll see a few icons on the left and KFM (a graphical file manager) showing some of the contents of my home directory. Although the screenshot doesn't show it, KFM is more than a file manager, it's also a WWW browser and FTP client... as it operates with the whole, "network transparent" theology. Now on to screen Two.

[Image]

Not much to speak of in screen Two other than you'll notice the kdehelp application that functions exactly like a WWW browser. The background for desktop One is still a blue gradient even though Two is a nice, brown marble wallpaper. All of the panel and task bar settings are the same but I thought I'd give you a good look at the help app. Now on to Three.

[Image]

In Three you will notice yet another background wallpaper, the kmail email client (that is laid out similar to the ever popular Eudora), the ksdc Audio CD player (which uses the Cddb Internet database to identify Audio CDs and provide Artist, CD Title, and track title information) and the KMix Audio Mixer. The "i" button on the CD player contains a popup of sites related to Audio CDs and concert listings. Selecting something will open up a KFM window in WWW browser mode and connect to the site listed. For example, one of the selections in the "i" (for Information) button is "Performances > tourdates.com". From the Three screenshot you can see I'm listening to the Titanic Soundtrack and selecting the previously mentioned "i" selection would connect to tourdates.com passing it a request for information about James Horner on tour. I could really go on and on about the CD player because it also connects to where to buy other CDs by the same artist, and well as handing off to the various WWW search engines for more info. It's really,really cool. Can you tell I'm impressed? Ok. That's enough on Three, now on to Four.

[Image] In desktop Four you'll see the KDE Control Center which is KDE's version of a configuration and control panel. I have the Desktop item

and the Windows item expanded but all of the other items are collapsed. You'll notice that the desktop Screensaver is selected. I've picked the "krock" saver and have opened the setup dialog for it. I offer this as an example of the detail that the KDE folks have put into the KDE package... virtually everything is configurable... and in a graphical way. The desktop from which the

screenshot was taken had both simulated screens moving at the same time and you could compare the original settings verses the changes you had made... which is really cool. Anyway, pardon me for ranting and raving.

That's enough screenshots for this installment and I've gone over a handful of the default apps that come with KDE. As I continue my review of KDE I'll explain in more detail what functions and features it has, what applications come with it, how well each piece works, and what bugs I've noticed. I installed the Beta 3 release so there are still some bugs in there but I've not

had any bugs affect the stability of the whole package nor Linux... which has the rock solid stability the computer industry has come to expect with Unix and its flavors.

It is rather odd running KDE on Linux because it almost turns Linux into a different feeling Operating System... like it is no longer a multiuser, Internet server, multitasking beast... but believe me it still is. KDE is very fast on my machine and switching between panes and applications is instantaneous... in fact, it'd have to say that it is noticeably faster than my wife's Windows 95 side of the machine... even with twice as much stuff running.

KDE is just another user program to Linux and the X Window System can serve many users simultaneously over a network with X terminals or an X server running on another machine... either over a LAN or over the Internet... but those are too advanced topics for now. :)

LOGOUT:

I'll continue to learn and play with KDE and all of the applications that come with it so stay tuned for more next week BUT don't let me slow you down. If you

want to learn more about the KDE, how it is free and available in source code or binary format, you can visit the KDE homepage (mentioned earlier) whenever you feel like it. The KDE site doesn't contain a horde of information (like the online docs do) but you can find a list of available applications, a some screenshots and links to KDE app homepages, etc. ...AND JUST IN CASE you were wondering, NO... this IS NOT an April Fool's joke, ok?

As always, if you have any questions or comments, just send me an email:
dowdle@icstech.com

Thanks for reading!

Scott Dowdle

[Image]

Editor Dana P. Jacobson
dpj@streport.com

>From the Atari Editor's Desk "Saying it like it is!"

This is probably going to be a first for me, but an appropriate one. As you'll see later in this section, "People Are Talking" columnist Joe Mirando makes some good points in his editorial comments this week. I want to add to those comments; but doing so here, before you have a chance to read Joe's column, would be wrong. So, my editorial comments can be found at the end of this week's section, after "People Are Talking".

To be continued...

Gaming Section

Psygnosis To Do N64 Games!

"Mystical Ninja"!
"Blasto"!
"MLB '99"!
And more!

Industry News STR Game Console NewsFile - The Latest Gaming News!

Psygnosis To Begin N64 Publishing This Year

Despite being owned by PlayStation-maker Sony Computer Entertainment America, Psygnosis has obtained a license from Nintendo and plans to publish at least two N64 games, sources say, speaking on condition of anonymity. When asked about Psygnosis' N64 plans, an official maintained yesterday that the company is a "multi-platform developer" concentrating on PlayStation and PC titles, declining to comment further.

However, two weeks ago, Psygnosis VP of Business Affairs Berry Kane told MMWire that N64 development is something that it will "definitely" consider, believing that "there is no reason why we won't look at all available platforms," including N64. A rocky history with its parent company may have sparked Psygnosis' expected move. Psygnosis' reported plans to support a platform from a company that rival's its parent's PlayStation is nothing new. Psygnosis-developed

Wipeout and Destruction Derby were published by Softbank for Sega Saturn, a Psygnosis official says.

Sony, in late 1996, tried to sell Psygnosis, reportedly for a bloated \$200m-\$300m, but removed the "for sale" sign that November, citing the quality of Destruction Derby and Wipeout XL. Ironically, our sources say that Destruction Derby and Wipeout XL are the first two Psygnosis titles expected for N64, presumably this year. Porting and revamping the PC- and PSX-based games to N64's cartridge-based format is being handled by Psygnosis' development studios in the U.K., one source told us. THQ, in early 1997, had inked a deal with Sega of America and Psygnosis to distribute seven Psygnosis Saturn titles. But the deal fell through and THQ did not distribute the games, a THQ official says.

All-New PlayStation Exclusive MLB '99

FOSTER CITY, CALIF. (April 15) ENTERTAINMENT WIRE - April 15, 1998 - Play-By-Play Announcing By The Legendary Vin Scully Highlights This Year's PlayStation MLB Videogame Sony Interactive Studios America announced today that MLB '99(TM), the next installment in PlayStation's incredibly popular MLB series, is now available, exclusively for the PlayStation(TM) game console. With all 30 MLB teams and all the players, MLB '99 utilizes a full 3D game engine, real-time rendering, detailed player attributes and sizes, and exclusive features not found in any other baseball videogame like Total Control Fielding(TM) and play-by-play by Hall-of-Fame announcer Vin Scully.

"In addition to continually giving sports gamers the best looking and playing sports videogames on the market, we deliver PlayStation-exclusive key features, which is why this year's MLB '99 will be hugely popular among sports gamers and professional athletes," said Jeff Fox, vice president, marketing, Sony Interactive Studios America. "For example, MLB '99 exclusively features Total Control Fielding(TM), which lets gamers select how they want to field and throw, and 'Spring Training Mode,' which lets players see if they have what it takes to make it to the big leagues."

MLB '99 has the look and feel of real baseball, with more than 140 new personalized moves and stances of MLB pitchers and batters. Highly detailed player attributes and realistic player sizes are another element that add to the game's realism. During the development of MLB '99, different MLB star's movements, such as Giants' All-Star pitcher Shawn Estes and center fielder Darryl Hamilton, Colorado Rockies' pitcher Darryl Kile, Chicago White Sox' infielder Ray Durham and Arizona Diamondbacks' outfielder Karim Garcia, were "motion captured" to ensure the most realistic MLB player animations would be used in the game. All new motion-capture animations include, home plate and fielder collisions; side arm, barehanded, backhanded, twirl throws; over the fence and diving catches; double play transitions; backhand stabs; throw from the knees; "crow hops" and field and throw on the run.

A sneak preview demo of MLB '99 was given to the teams at their practice facilities during Spring Training. MLB players didn't just want to be a part of the development process of MLB '99, they wanted to play the game. All MLB teams were given PlayStations and a copy of MLB '99 to play throughout the 1998 season.

MLB '99 is now available and features Cal Ripken, Jr. on the package.

MLB '99 -- Key Features

All MLB teams and players with the latest signings and trades

Genuine MLB stadiums and crowd noises

with specific stadium ambiance

Five dynamic camera perspectives

1998 Uniforms -- player names with updated home

away and alternate uniforms

Play-by-play by Hall-Of-Fame announcing legend Vin Scully

Total Control Fielding(TM): user can select how to field and throw

More than 150 new personalized moves and stances of MLB pitchers and batters

State of the art 3D game engine

providing amazing graphics and fluid and fast gameplay -- no waiting or slow load times

Highly detailed player attributes and ultra realistic players sizes

All new motion captured animations: home plate and fielder collisions; side arm, barehanded, backhanded, twirl throws; over the fence and diving catches; double play transitions; backhand stabs; throw from the knees; "crow hops" and field and throw on the run

Spring Training Mode: Create players to play in Spring Training Mode

Player performance (hitting, pitching, fielding and throwing) determines if they will make it to the Major Leagues

Play Modes: Spring Training

Home Run Derby(TM) exhibition

full season with multiple season lengths

All-Star(TM)

Interleague play and expansion teams: Arizona Diamondbacks and Tampa Bay Devil Rays

"Clubhouse" Intelligence: each team manages like its real life counterpart

End-of-season awards: AL and NL MVP and Cy Young

Three difficulty levels (rookie; veteran and all-star)

Batting cursor option (veteran and all-star levels) for the advanced gamer

Simulation and arcade modes

Supports memory card

Analog Controller and Multi tap

1 to 2 player. Up to eight players can play with the Multi tap adapter

Konami of America: Mystical Ninja Leaps Into the Fray

Konami of America, Inc., the leading developer of electronic entertainment for the home video game and coin-op markets, announces the shipping of *Mystical Ninja*, an adventure-packed game for the Nintendo 64. *Mystical Ninja* features Konami's classic character, Goemon, in a new game that combines adventure, arcade, action and RPG elements. The new game, consistent with Konami's commitment to creative 3D graphics and animation, features giant 3D bosses and enemies and brilliant graphics and animation. *Mystical Ninja* also allows the user to play as one of four different unique characters, while immersed in a fully interactive world. Plus, *Mystical Ninja* will be available for Game Boy users.

"In *Mystical Ninja*, we are thrilled to bring back to the lime light the well-known Goemon," said Jon Sloan, Konami marketing manager, "We also are pleased to place Goemon in the N64 environment which allows for engaging, multi-faceted game play. Gamers will be especially excited when encountering the game's hidden bonus games, surprises and new puzzle adventures. They'll be in for a wacky ride!"

Alien Fiends Beware -- Blasto Has Arrived

FOSTER CITY, CALIF. (April 16) BUSINESS WIRE - April 16, 1998 - Sony Computer Entertainment America made the universe a much safer place today with the release of *Blasto(TM)*, the innovative videogame developed exclusively for the PlayStation(R) game console by Sony Interactive Studios America. The character-driven 3D action/platform videogame, created in the tone of 1940s big-studio cartoon features, combines the best elements of platform, action

and shooter games. Blasto boasts huge, free-roaming 3D environments and nonlinear gameplay (with no "levels" to break the flow of the action), complemented by amazing graphics and colorful animation.

Blasto stars Sony Interactive Studios America's first originally-created superhero, the pompous and always humorous Captain Blasto, who comes to life with the voice of character actor Phil Hartman. With aliens to exterminate, puzzles to solve and gigantic monsters to run screaming from, the player is forced to negotiate tricky paths through six diverse environments, solving puzzles and fighting enemies at every turn. The ultimate aim? To find the evil Bosc(TM) and put an end to his nefarious schemes.

"Blasto is a shining example of the caliber of PlayStation games that are being developed by Sony Interactive Studios," said Andrew House, vice president, marketing, Sony Computer Entertainment America. "Captain Blasto is both a very original character and a parody of the superheroes that we all grew up with. Combine this with innovative 3D gameplay loaded with replayability, and we're confident that we have a sure-fire hit on our hands."

Blasto is proof positive that the PlayStation game console possesses the strengths and depths that developers are just now beginning to utilize. Blasto breaks out of the idea of levels, with the entire game constantly streaming from the CD, effectively becoming one gigantic world with multiple "episodes." PlayStation software breakthroughs such as environment mapping, dynamically lit characters and backgrounds, and fully interactive music continues to deliver innovative games that raise the popularity of the PlayStation game console to new heights.

So, just who is Captain Blasto? At the moment, he's the only hope the human race has for survival. He's big, he's strong, he's pompous and he loves to fry aliens. Blasto is just what the world needs -- a global patriot who wants nothing more than to rid the universe of every last slimy green alien. He believes that the ends certainly justify the means, especially if the means include zapping as many evil mutant clones as he possibly can. Blasto is Earth's only chance against Bosc and his army of twisted Pear Troopers.

Psygnosis Revisits a Masterpiece: Sentinel Returns

FOSTER CITY, CALIF. (April 15) BUSINESS WIRE - April 15, 1998 - Sequel to Classic Strategy Game Features Same Addictive, Chilling Gameplay with Advanced Graphic Redesign and Musical Score by John Carpenter. *Sentinel*(tm), a 1980s strategy game by Geoff Crammond, became an instant classic, with an elegantly simple design, sparse yet chilling landscape, and the slow tension of a psychological thriller.

Now, Psygnosis unveils *Sentinel Returns*(tm), the sequel to this first true virtual reality game that combines the same intensely compelling gameplay with stunning visual and

sound enhancements including a score by master of terror, John Carpenter, who directed and wrote the soundtrack for horror movie, Halloween. Sentinel Returns will be available for both PC and PlayStation(R) game console in August, for an estimated retail price of \$49.95. Produced by No Name Games, and developed by Hookstone, a U.K. production studio, Sentinel Returns takes advantage of over ten years of technical improvements to produce a graphic theme that is both distinctive and haunting. The stunning 3D graphic redesign uses advanced texturing, animation and lighting techniques to create four eerie themed play environments, Earth, Air, Fire and Water, as well as a final, most terrifying level called the Void.

Adding to the atmospheric sense of the game is a chilling score by John Carpenter, a musician and director known as the master of superb pacing and unrelenting terror. Carpenter's many credits include Halloween, Assault on Precinct 13, the Fog and Escape from New York, among others. Sentinel Returns also features stunning audio with Q-Sound technology that adds to the player's feeling of being surrounded and trapped. As in the original title, the gameplay in Sentinel Returns is unnervingly abstract. Rather than being an object in the game universe, the player is a presence that moves through the landscapes by transferring to different bodies. Alternately absorbing and expending energy, the player seeks to gain control of each level by rising to its highest point in an effort to reach to the final, ultimate battle against the nightmare that is the Sentinel. At each level, the player must also avoid the invisible yet deadly, energy-draining beams of the opposition.

Sentinel Returns also features a unique sense of claustrophobia and panic, which comes from both the unearthly, atmospheric environment, and the player's limited ability to survey the landscape. Scrolling is slow and deliberate, engendering a sense of sweating paranoia as players, feeling their energy being drained, struggle to look around in order to escape the deadly beams. Other refinements that enhance Sentinel Returns include a more gradual learning curve that lures the gamer in, then becomes progressively more addictive and challenging. Sentinel Returns also features more than 600 crafted levels, all of which must be sequentially attained and conquered. Another major enhancement is a PC network play option, which adds an entirely new dimension to the game by allowing multiple players on a single playfield, racing against each other to finish each level.

ONLINE WEEKLY STReport OnLine The wires are a hummin'!

Compiled by Joe Mirando

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Hidi ho friends and neighbors. I'll tell you right off the bat that pickins is mighty slim this week, so I thought that this might be a good time to kick back a bit and consider exactly where we are. No, I don't mean geographically. I'm talking about the state of computing. When many of us first got involved with computers, the 'state-of-the-art' was an Apple II with 2 Kilobytes of memory and a flashy new tape drive. That was the system I was first exposed to. It was wondrous. All you had to do was turn the computer on, put the OS tape in the tape drive, type in two lines of cryptic code, wait for five minutes, and then load whichever language you were working in at the time (for me it was Pascal, COBOL, and Integer Basic).

Connecting up to a remote computer was another matter all together. You had to follow all of the steps outlined above, then type in more cryptic commands to access the modem (a whopping 300 baud, by the way), then type in the command string and phone number, then convince the remote computer that you really were supposed to be there and that the reason that it rejected your password was line noise, not because you typed the password incorrectly (if you couldn't convince the remote computer of this in three tries it would disconnect you and you'd have to start all over again). And forget about uploading or downloading files of any kind. This was ASCII-only, no-text-editor, no-graphics, in-your-face computing. Neither the modem nor the computer's CPU would have been able to handle anything more.

And yet we were on the cutting edge of technology. These were the first affordable(?) microcomputers. Nevermind that they were the size of large portable typewriters, or that the monitor was a nine inch monochrome display, or that you could type faster on an old manual typewriter, or that you could fit more text on a post-it note than you could in RAM, or that they broke down or overheated at the drop of a hat. This was the forefront of the strange new world. All you had to do to enjoy the latest game was to spend several hours in front of the computer typing in listings from CREATIVE COMPUTING, then save it to the tape drive and pray that the operation went well, then run the program to see what typos you made, fix them, re-save the program, then, if all went right, play the game.

And here we sit, in 1998, some of us in front of our current examples of state-of-the-art for the computer world, and take for granted most of what went before. No, I'm not saying that those old computers were better, easier, faster, or cheaper than what's available today. What I am saying is that those early machines taught us something much more important than how to use a computer. They taught us WHY they work. They taught us about

ingenuity in the face of a daunting technology. They taught us patience and the value of conscientious work. If you had a problem, you had to find it yourself. There was no set-up wizard, no on-line help utility, and usually no office expert available to find it for you. You were on your own and you either sank or swam (believe me, I sank quite a few times).

Most of the people who use computers today are not computer people. They are housewives, shop workers, hobbyists and students, who just want to surf the net, design a poster, look at a map, save a recipe, or contact a friend. Their computer is just a tool to help them do that. And that's... okay. It does however leave a lot of room for others to get involved... troubleshooters, hucksters, and worst of all, the government all want a piece of the action. The problem is, they're getting it.

Think back to the last time you had to bring your car into the dealership for a tune-up instead of doing it yourself. It used to be that all you needed was the parts and a timing light to do the job yourself. Now it's a job that can only be done by the dealer or by a large service station (remember actual service stations??). That's about what we're heading for in the computer world. And it's mostly because we, as a whole, don't know enough about our computers. With narrowly defined plug-and-play devices and the upcoming computers on a chip, there will be less and less that we need to know about our computers, less that we'll have to do, less need to even think about the computer as anything other than a tool.

Of course, computers will keep getting faster and faster, so we'll be able to get into tech-trouble even faster than we do now.

Well, that's about all I've got to say for the time being. Anybody got an extra Prozac? <g>

Let's take a look at what's going on over at Delphi...

>From Delphi's Atari Advantage Forum

Al Horton posts:

"My son recently purchased a used Sega Saturn video game system, and with it came a device called "The NetLink". The NetLink is a 28.8 modem that plugs into the cartridge port on the Saturn and then with the NetLink Browser CD you can access the Internet. I looked at this system and was really quite impressed that a video game system could not only access the internet but also do it quite well, with Email, Frames, sounds, pictures, and much more.

But what really impressed me was the fact that it took my 14yr old son, who is NOT computer literate, all of 3

minutes to set it up and access the web. He needed only a few lines of information to type in (phone number, password etc.) of our current account and he was up and flying in no time.

Now this got me to really thinking... after MANY tries at getting STick, STing, CAB, etc etc up and running with little luck, and seeing all the messages in the newsgroups (and here) about everyone else running into tons of problems, WHY can this little video game system access the Internet so very well and with no problems at all yet our Atari's have so many problems??

Don't get me wrong.. I'm not complaining but trying to understand. I am blown away that my 14 year old son can access the internet with a \$75 video game system and I have nothing but problems. Is it REALLY that hard for an Atari to access the web? Why can a video game system do it with no files to edit, no countless folders to place, config files to edit, etc etc etc..

I'm totally blown away by the Sega NetLink and after many, many hours of playing around with CAB and STick I cannot believe that accessing the web can be so easy. Again, I'm not complaining.. just trying to understand."

Always seeing the humor in a circumstance, I tell Al:

"Probably the best way to look at the Sega vs. Atari/STiK comparison is that your son is 14 years old. We are... not. <g> On a more serious note, the Sega system is very structured. There is only one model, one modem, one set of software. This makes the connection software's job much easier. It does not need to take into account the fact that you may decide to switch modems or browsers or that you may not have a particular operating system or serial port speed. There are probably other good reasons too, but that's just off the top of my head."

BlackJ adds:

"...I am a netlink owner myself. First of all the Sega Saturn is one hefty piece of hardware, two parallel 24Mhz Hitachi RISC processors. Second of all, the netlink web browser is also very limited on it's capabilities though. You see the sega saturn has dedicated hardware, but only two megs of ram. Since it has dedicated hardware and software that is universally the same, it doesn't have to be made to have the flexible code needed for computer platform internet. Also cab and stik are not that hard to set up in my experience. Besides, atarians have a much wider support base than of the sega console. In case you haven't notice the planetweb browser is considerably slow. at least on your atari you can handle files over 400k, can save things, have telnet and a manarue [sic] of computer oriented things. Now if you have a Falcon, it can probably

blow your son's netlink out of the water in just about everything. Now if you have a regular st, that's different because you have 4colors max and a 19.2k port limit."

Greg Evans adds his thoughts:

"Er, hm! Al! You can't mention Sega in this Forum, don't you know that?!? <grin> It took most of us many tries to get online with our Atari's it's true. The only thing I can figure is the Sega is a closed system so software doesn't need to be able to run under multiple TOS and compatible OS's, various screen resolutions and processors as well as upgrades, standard and not. When it finally worked for me, STiNG only really required editing two files -- default.cfg and the dial script. For the longest time I simply didn't have STiNG enabled so it would connect and not be able to go anywhere. Now you could argue that "active" should be the default option and not the other way around, that's true. Don't give up on STiNG or STiK. Email me your configuration files and I'll fix them for you. If you have a Falcon, especially, surfing is very nice in 256 colors."

"Turbo" Nick tells Al:

"I haven't tried using STiNG yet, but I didn't have much trouble getting STiK & CAB to work using Delphi as an ISP. That, I believe, was largely thanks to the helpful people who, once they got it working, uploaded their DEFAULT.CFG and DIAL.SCR files here. I downloaded those and made only a few changes (e.g., phone number, login name, password in DIAL.SCR). I haven't been able to get STiK & CAB to work properly with my local ISP, but that (according to VILLAREAL in this forum) is probably because I can only get a CSLIP connection to that ISP, and STiK - despite what it says in the comments in the DEFAULT.CFG - will not work with CSLIP. With any luck, I will be able to get STiNG to work with that ISP. My first step (after downloading the latest version of STiNG) will be to get it working here. Again, one or more of those who have it working here have uploaded their config/script files. So, I don't expect to have too much trouble with it here."

Al replies:

"Thanks to all who responded to my message about the Sega NetLink and the internet. Mayhaps I misspoke, or didn't really type what I was trying to say. Let me try one more time (though its early in the morning and I'm only on cup two of coffee..grin) I didn't mean to imply that the Sega NetLink was a better device than what is on the Atari or that the NetLink browser was better than CAB. I was just babbling that I was blown away that: A) a video game system could browse theinternet at all; B) that it did so quite well; and C) that it was set up with almost no effort at

all.

I was amazed that after playing with CAB-STik-STing for what seems like forever (put this file here, put this file there, edit this file, now edit this file, etc etc) that my 14yr old son, with no instruction file at all, was surfing the web after loading up his software CD and answering about 4 simple questions.

Again, I hope that no one got the impression that I was saying that the Sega NetLink was better than our Atari systems and if I gave that impression I apologize. I was just lamenting that it would be nice if the Atari had just one package, you told it to "Install", answered a few questions, then BOOM.. you were on the internet. Okay.. enough said... back to another cup of coffee and editing config files... fribble-frabble-frubble-frum...."

Dana Jacobson tells Al:

"I think that we got the right impression. The Sega console that you're describing sounds like it's almost Internet-ready, right outta the box. It would be nice if there were Atari browsers that were that way. But, as I think it was Joe that mentioned it, it's not that generic on Atari machines. They're not all the same; each may require a different set-up. One of these days the Atari versions will become more simple. I think the reason that there seem to be problems now is because updates are coming out before most of us become accustomed to the software. Plus, configuring Internet settings is relatively new for Atari users."

Greg Evans tells Al:

"No offense taken here! By the way, if you use Magic (and you are welcome to buy my copy!) you can use PPP Connect for easy point-and-click setup of internet access. I haven't tried it since Magic is flaky on the Afterburner and I have STinG working anyway. You still need to tell CAB about client programs, etc. but that's pretty straight forward."

I add:

"Nope, I think we all understood what you were saying. I find it interesting that many of us came up with the same reply... Structure, structure, structure. <grin>

All the parts of the NetLink are hard-coded to the only option possible for the system. I doubt that anyone took your post to mean that you were saying that the Sega was better than an actual computer. I didn't.

I know what you mean about having to mess with config files and such for STiK or STinG. But trust me, once you get it going, it's pretty cool. Have another cup of coffee (I live on coffee myself) and have another try at editing them there config files."

Larry White posts:

"I've seen several references to "Suzy B's" CD Roms. I know that there are several collections from different suppliers. Any thoughts about how they compare. I have Crawley Crypt #1 already."

Dana Jacobson tells Larry:

"Michael is biased - he's half of Suzy B's! <rbg>

I'm also biased - I know Michael and the time and effort he's put into putting together these CDROM collections. They are well worth the investment. There's no comparing any of the available collections unless you're looking for something specific; they are all good. I'd say Michael's are better in a lot of ways. Certainly the service is undeniably the best." *The only thing I'd like to add here is that Michael may be biased, but I'd be willing to bet that if his collection wasn't the best that it could possibly be, he'd tell you that straight-out.

Greg Evans asks:

"Would there be any interest in a GEM front-end for setting up the STinG configuration files, default.cfg and dial.scr? I may take a whack at it and see what I can do. First release will probably be write-only, meaning it can create new files but not update old ones."

I reply to Greg:

"YEAH! I think that'd be great. I can't offer help in programming, but I'd be able to test out features and such for you."

Dana Jacobson adds:

"Absolutely! That would likely give me the incentive to try STiNG out again. <grin>"

Bob Trowbridge adds his support:

"Sure! Especially as I am thinking about adding an ISP in addition to Delphi. Were you thinking of something like PP Connect that comes with CAB 2.5?"

Greg tells Bob:

"I'll have to take a look at PPP connect. I own it but don't use it because it needs Magic. Actually, I own that too, but don't like it as much as Geneva. What I imagine is a menu bar and dialogs hanging off it collecting information about your ISP -- DNS, domain name, etc., and personal info -- username, password, etc. After you fill everything in the program will write the default.cfg and dial.scr files. Oh yeah, I forgot, you will also be able to specify your login script."

Greg also adds:

"Alex Clauss, the author of CAB confirmed for me that CAB 2.7 (the next English release -- 2.6 will not be released in English) will support cookies! This means that all of us telneting into Delphi from our ISPs will also be able to connect through the Delphi home page. I think you'll need to use CAB.OVL 1.2805 or later for that to work. No ETA for 2.7, unfortunately. Also, HTML 4.0 will follow in a subsequent release."

Well folks, that's it for this week's installment. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

>From the Atari Editor's Desk "Saying it like it is!"

...continued

In Joe's comments above, he makes some terrific points regarding earlier computing. What I get from Joe's comments is that computer users of yesteryear got a sense of accomplishment using those computers. The end-user, that's you, did most of the work. If you're about my age (no laughing please!), you may remember some of those science hobby kits when you were a kid. You purchased the kit, whatever it happened to be, put it together and prayed that you followed the instructions exactly and your project worked.

Yesteryear's computing was similar. As Joe mentioned, the

user might type in countless lines of what seemed to be gobbledegook program code; and if done correctly, turned out to be some interesting program. If you made a mistake, you had to find the error and fix it. To get that program to work seemed frustrating at times, but the reward was a program that worked.

It's not that way today. Other than compatibility problems, most computers are foolproof. Just about anyone can use one and perform most typical uses. Most computers today are sold pre-loaded with software, including the operating system (Windows '95, for example). Buying new software and running it is a breeze. How difficult is it to select setup.exe and click on OK? And then select RUN or double-click your newly created program icon? Where's the sense of accomplishment? Putting in the disk or CDROM in the right slot, right side up?

As Joe mentioned above, more and more people are using computers today but really don't know how to use them. People who started out using 8-bit and 16-bit computers have a vast edge, and a basic understanding of what they're using. Today's users have no idea what RAM means, or signifies. All they know is more is better, but not why, for example.

You think I'm kidding? Many people at work have new computers at home. On occasion, one will ask me a question regarding a problem they're having. Mind you, I do not own a peccy but use one at work. A typical question goes something like this: the person is writing a letter or something, using MS Word for Windows. They'll tell me the letter doesn't "look right". I try to get them to explain, but the explanation is usually very vague that I can't imagine what they're experiencing. So, I suggest that they bring in the file from home. One person, in such a position exclaimed "I can't bring in my computer; I don't know how to take it apart!" After my laughter subsided, I told the person, no, bring me the file on a disk. "How do I do that?" is the typical response. Save the file to disk, or copy it to disk, I tell them. Same response as above. I eventually have to spell it out to them and show them on my own computer.

Granted, every "knob" will run into problems - we all did. But many users today just "run" rather than "use" software. They don't care why something works, or doesn't. They don't care how something works; they're simply interested in the end result regardless of what happened to achieve that result. There's very little curiosity. There is a sense of accomplishment ("I did it!"), but many have no idea what they did.

These are just some of the reasons why I continue to use Atari computers. The sense of how I got there is just as important as getting there.

Until next time...

EDITORIAL QUICKIES

SOME CLASSICS OF BRITISH BROADCASTING

Jon Snow: "In a sense, Deng Xiaoping's death was inevitable, wasn't it?"

Expert : "Er, yes." (Channel 4 News)

"As Phil De Glanville said, each game is unique, and this one is no different to any other." (John Sleighholme - BBC1)

"If England are going to win this match, they're going to have to score a goal." (Jimmy Hill - BBC)

"Beethoven, Kurtág, Charles Ives, Debussy - four very different names." (Presenter, BBC Proms, Radio 3)

"Julian Dicks is everywhere. It's like they've got eleven Dicks on the field." (Metro Radio Sports Commentary)

Listener: "My most embarrassing moment was when my artificial leg fell off at the altar on my wedding day."

Simon Fanshawe: "How awful! Do you still have an artificial leg? (Talk Radio)

Interviewer: "So did you see which train crashed into which train first?"

15-year-old: "No, they both ran into each other at the same time." (BBC Radio 4)

Kilroy-Silk: "Did you mean to get pregnant?"

Girl: "No. It was a cock-up."

Grand National winning jockey Mick Fitzgerald: "Sex is an anti-climax after that!"

Desmond Lynam: "Well, you gave the horse a wonderful ride, everyone saw that." (BBC)

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